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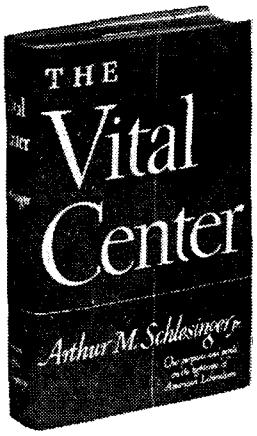

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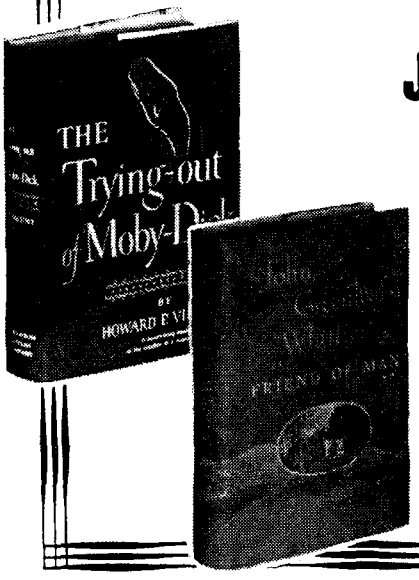

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THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR

VOLUME 18 *Autumn 1949* NUMBER 4

Are We Hysterical?

As I WRITE these lines either there is or there is not a condition of anti-Communist hysteria in the United States. If I say there is such a condition I shall be accused of being pro-Communist, or at least a Communist "dupe." If I belong to any one of a number of university faculties, this suspicion may injure my chances of promotion. If I am a member of Congress, it may make my re-election less probable. If I do some other sort of work, it may hurt my business or injure me socially.

If, on the other hand, I maintain that there is no hysteria, I shall be regarded in some quarters as unworthy to use the name made venerable by R. W. Emerson, *primus*. My truly liberal friends will stop inviting me to meetings of protest. I shall be asked if age or (hideous accusation) prosperity has dimmed the light of liberty that once shone in my windows.

Obviously I am in trouble. The dictionary definitions of hysteria do not help me much. I shall make my own by saying that I regard hysteria, in the indicated sense, as a state in which the victim's emotions override his reason. A person suffering from anti-Communist hysteria would not be able to weigh the arguments for and against communism in a logical manner. But I do not believe this is the question at the moment. The hysteria complained of is a tendency to characterize as communism what actually is not communism, and to call persons Communists when they are actually not Communists. Confusion is made worse by the fact that communism has come to mean two different things: a set of ideas and a new phase of Russian imperialism. An individual might conceivably be attracted by the ideas and abhor the imperialism, though I do not believe he

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would get far in the orthodox Communist Party of today if this were his position.

It is seemingly necessary for us who are not (in our own estimation) hysterical about anything to do some thinking. I shall begin by mentioning certain symptoms and asking whether or not they indicate hysteria.

First, we have had several court trials loosely associated in the public mind as dealing with communism. In each case a grand jury has indicted, the recognized forms of law have been followed, a jury has been chosen with the usual system of challenges, and the rights of the accused have been scrupulously protected. If the Russian government had followed a cooperative and propitiatory policy at the end of the Second World War, these cases might not have been brought to court. Still, I do not see that there is anything hysterical in the proceedings. There may be some hysteria in the reactions of the sensational press, however—as well as the radio.

Second, the Federal Government and some state governments have set up systems of "loyalty checks." The overwhelming majority of public employees subjected to these tests have been found "loyal." Some damage has been done to the purity of the civil service ideal by injecting into it an opinion test. Still, I am not sure that some sort of check was not desirable. A national government, at least, cannot safely employ in its "sensitive" agencies persons whose allegiance is to a foreign government.

Third, as readers of THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR's Summer number were reminded, and as every newspaper subscriber knows, Communists and individuals suspected of being Communists are being harried out of education. Many others are being intimidated. I do not contend that the avowed Communist has an inalienable right to teach in tax-supported schools. I do believe that we are beginning to show hysteria when mere suspicion causes a teacher to be discharged or placed on probation, and when honest men, not Communists, fear to express their opinions.

Fourth, under political pressure, tax-supported institutions have begun to require "loyalty oaths" from their teachers. These oaths are usually such as any good citizen might take. Their unhappy feature is that they are now considered necessary, whereas formerly

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they were not. A teacher used to be judged by his associates, his superiors and his students. The "loyalty oath" assumes that these personal judgments are not sufficient. It introduces an element of rigidity where there should be freedom; in seeking to exclude communism, it introduces one of communism's elements.

Fifth, we have the "witch hunt," outstandingly exemplified by the House Committee on Un-American Activities. We also have evidence that the Federal Bureau of Investigation is collecting personal dossiers in which the principle of guilt by association is plainly implied. If I dislike General Franco, whom the Communists also dislike, and if I say so and they say so—why, then, I may be on Mr. Hoover's list.

Yet I am not certain that even the witch hunt is proof of hysteria in the hunters. Members of investigating committees bask in the pleasant glow of publicity. And what better sport is there than riding to hounds? In the case of Mr. Hoover's F.B.I., we have men admirably trained in running down real criminals and no more averse to praise than men of more common mould. The Russians do have spies in this country. Some American Communists, in their twisted minds, have undoubtedly felt it a good deed to aid such spies. If so, it is the F.B.I.'s duty to get after them. I do not believe it is hysteria that has led the F.B.I. in some instances to go beyond this duty, act upon absurd standards, and harass innocent persons. I think it is ambition. I think it is the police instinct, which even in a democracy must forever be held in check by common sense and the Bill of Rights.

We might find some traces of hysteria in the comments of editorial writers and columnists. Yet, with notorious exceptions, I believe the urban press and its writers have kept their heads reasonably well. They certainly have not stirred up their readers to violent action. No one knows what tomorrow's news will be, but as this is written and sent to press there have been no serious outbreaks of violence against Communists or supposed Communists. The I.W.W. fared far worse after the First World War than the Communists have after the Second.

What, then, is the diagnosis? I shall offer one. We are not, as a nation, in a state of wild excitement. As a nation we have more sense

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than some of those who profess to lead us and also to speak for us.

The danger we face is a danger in thinking rather than in feeling. We are in danger of assuming that because communism is described (falsely, I believe) as a doctrine of the left, anybody who goes "left of center," to that extent comes closer to being a Communist. We are in danger of treating people who believe in freedom as we treat those who believe in slavery. We are setting up opinion tests which will put a premium on the unimaginative, the unexperimental and the reactionary. We are corrupting our teachers, our writers, our producers, our radio sponsors, our public men—bribing them to play safe, punishing them for having original ideas.

We are in danger of setting up a closed system of thought and action in our part of our continent, as the Russians have done in their part of their continent. I do not believe such a system here could ever be as rigid in its way as the Russian system is in its different way. I do believe that the drive to censor, check, find guilty by association, repress, investigate and coerce is, as far as it goes, a drive against the democratic way of life; that those who follow this road are betraying the American tradition; and that some Americans—perhaps many more than those who profess the Communist heresy—would like to do just that.

The danger that we shall adulterate and debase our democracy in the effort to suppress communism is greater than the danger that the Communists will be able to corrupt and betray us. There aren't enough of them to do this. If they break the law—as they are likely to do if they adhere to the party line—let the police deal with them; if there are not enough police let us hire some more. I believe the American public would accept this as a reasonable solution. I do not believe it is hysterical enough to surrender its birthright of freedom in order to deal with a few thousand crackpots.

The answer to an assault upon democracy is more democracy. The answer is equally good whether the assault comes from the so-called "Left" or from the actual Right. And democracy means, among other things, freedom to say or publish what one thinks, without fear. This is the great tradition. I believe this nation, if the case is properly presented, will rally to it.

R. W. Emerson, secundus

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British Socialism: Pitfalls and Prospects

C. L. Mowat

THE LABOR government has been in power for four years in Great Britain; its fifth year will be its last before another general election. It has accomplished much, and in most difficult circumstances. The building of the welfare state has been virtually completed; public education has been extended; a large housing program has been carried forward; a good part of the economy has been nationalized. Simultaneously, a severe economic crisis in the country's balance of payments has been faced and, with notable aid from the United States and the countries of the Commonwealth, has been passed. Production has increased; exports have increased beyond the prewar levels. All this has been done under a regime of austerity, of rationing and controls such as no other democratic country has contemplated—far less succeeded in enforcing on itself. And it has been done in good order and, on the whole, with good will. It is doubtful if any other government would have done better; it might have trimmed its social policy more to the winds of economic circumstance, but delays in social reform might have retarded, rather than speeded, economic recovery—by increasing social discontents.

Nonetheless, the day of reckoning approaches. Conservatives and Socialists must needs think of their programs, but especially the Socialists—since, for once, they will be on the defensive. In the past the Socialists have assumed the capture of power, some time in the future; now the power has been theirs, and the responsibilities, and their program has been in large part carried out, used up. There is need of a new program and a new philosophy, and they must be based on two things: the circumstances of the present, and the results of socialism as it has been developed since 1945 in Great Britain

✪ Associate of professor of history at the University of California in Los Angeles, C. L. MOWAT returned to his native England in 1947-48 on a Guggenheim fellowship.

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—results which have proved somewhat different from those hoped for.

For example, the virtues of nationalization, long one of Labor's major goals, have been called into question by the experiences of the coal-mining industry since the National Coal Board took over on "vesting day," January 1, 1947. One unexpected result has been the lack of any real improvement in the morale of the miner. Nationalization has not brought workers' control; the national and divisional boards, the area and colliery officials, are the old directors and officers writ large—and in the higher levels made more remote and impersonal. Shorter hours, higher wages, more mechanization have increased costs without greatly increasing output, even though everything is done to bring home to the miner the fact that greater production is vital to the survival of the nation; he works no harder for the public good than he did for private profit. At the same time, nationalization has brought to the fore the problem of administration: can an industry so large and varied be managed from London, and if so, what pattern of organization will permit authority to be delegated, lines of communication kept clear, and decisions given rapidly, without leading to such a confusion of policies and competition between areas or departments as would defeat the objects of centralization and over-all planning. At present the system has among its principal products an increase in the number of non-producers in the industry, an unexpectedly high range of salaries for executives at headquarters, and a feeling of frustration on the part of many colliery managers and production officials who must serve many masters and endure long delays while waiting for rulings on points large and small.

Nationalization adds new twists to old questions posed by monopolies. There is the problem of the relations between public monopolies. For example, the Coal Board's policies concerning supplies and prices affect the prices of the public bodies operating the railways and the supply of electricity and gas; railway policy affects coal policy; the production of electricity affects the railways. How are these public bodies to bargain with each other? If their policies conflict, who is the arbitrator?

Protection of the consumer is another thing which is not secured

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simply by putting the monopoly under a public corporation. How is the consumer to be protected against intolerable increases in the price of coal or electricity, when the demands of the wage-earners, and the needs of large industrial consumers, are likely to get much greater attention than his own feeble plaint? What has been done is to provide for Consumers' Councils, or consultative councils, both national and local, in connection with the supply of coal, electricity, gas, and with transport. It is not yet clear how effective they will be, but they look rather like stepchildren in the organizations, if not actually orphans of the storm. And at best they are likely to represent the large industrial consumers, and the local authorities, more than the individual citizen. And how, anyway, do you pick a representative of the common citizenry in their role as consumers? Perhaps a "question in the House" will check the misuse of power by a public monopoly. However, the proper relation between Parliament and the nationalized industries is still vague. Ministers have quite rightly refused to answer questions in the House of Commons on the day-to-day administration of the nationalized industries associated with them—for example, questions concerning train services —which only raises the old question between husband and wife as to what are "major" questions. Certainly, excessive interference by Parliament would be undesirable; so is immunity from criticism.

Another set of problems concerns the trade unions in their relation to nationalized industries. A trade union has both gained and lost in bargaining power when it has to deal, not with several employers or an employers' association, but with a national board or with the local officials of the board. In a way the stature of the union is raised when it negotiates directly, as one high contracting party dealing with another, with a national board created by Act of Parliament; but it has itself become institutionalized a little in the process, and must act with middle-aged deliberation. Its independence has been compromised further by the presence, on the boards of nationalized industries, of representatives of the trade union world. The unions have been careful not to demand representation, as such, on these boards; but their presence, perhaps under the theory of "virtual representation" only, is assured by the phraseology of the various acts, allowing the minister to include, as members

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appointed for their experience of industrial and commercial organization, those whose experience comes from the organization of labor. Trade union officials, when appointed to the boards of nationalized industries, have resigned their union positions; but it will take more than this to make them cease to be regarded as trade union men. And if even a slight whiff of trade unionism still clings to them, their old union—or even the whole trade union movement—may be held responsible for the Board's decisions. A share in management means a share in responsibility, a share in losses as well as in profits. This is what makes most unions fight shy of any hint of workers' control, or even representation on the boards. The matter has been frequently discussed, most recently at the Trades Union Congress in September, 1948. Yet in spite of hankerings after it by a few unions, chiefly those of the railwaymen and postal workers, the majority is firmly against it.

There are broader and more searching questions for the trade unions under a Labor government. Insofar as it is, for the working men, "their" government, with all industry either nationalized or subject to control by the state, how can their trade unions resist its demands? Are not they bound to support it, since its acts are in a sense their own? In practice, the question may often be ignored: a Labor government is the government of the whole nation, not of a part of it. In fact, there is frequent criticism by the working man that the government is too little sympathetic with him, that it has intervened to end strikes or to limit their effect by the use of troops, at the docks for example, more vigorously than other, non-Labor governments. And the Coal Board has been charged with being more high-handed, in its dealings with the men in particular pits, than the old colliery companies. On the other hand, the government, though it has had considerable support from the Trades Union Congress in the policy of pegging wages, can complain that many individual unions have made demands which are very embarrassing to it; for instance, the railwaymen's claim for higher wages from the Railway Executive.

Another question, and one on everyone's lips, is that of incentive. "People don't work as hard as they used to"—the charge is made as frequently now as after the First World War, and probably with

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as much justice. It is hard to prove. To the average citizen the "British working man" is typified by the plumber, the builder or the men repairing the roads; and they have always seemed to take little account of time. On the other hand, the casual visitor to a cotton mill or a steel works sees only the traditional hive of activity —bobbins revolving at tremendous speed, furnaces being tapped, and the white-hot metal spilling out into the moulds. Yet a graph of the consumption of electricity in a factory on a typical working day showed that the peak load was only once, and very briefly, reached in the early part of the morning, and that throughout the day consumption fluctuated, with marked dips at the various breaks for tea.[1] Perhaps conditions were always so; but now they matter more, since increased production is so imperative.

How to get it? Posters won't do the trick. "We work or want"—so the government's billboards were preaching, with admonitory forefinger, a year ago. It simply wasn't true, for the average person. There are two conditions in Britain today which have never existed before: full employment, and a complete system of social security which provides the "national minimum" for everyone. Fear of the future is no longer an incentive—if it ever was one—for hard work now and saving for a rainy day. As the *Economist* said in its celebrated article, "The Carrot and the Stick" (June 29, 1946), "nobody [now] gains anything from activity or suffers anything from inactivity. There is hardly a flavor of carrot or a shadow of the stick." Few, perhaps, will deplore the absence of the stick. But what of the carrot? Wages are a good deal higher than before the war, and have risen proportionately more than the costs of rent and food to the average working-class family. There is little incentive to work harder even when, as in so many trades, wages are based on piecework rates above a certain minimum: average effort will produce enough for average needs, more pay only means a larger deduction for income tax, and not enough additional spending money to be worth the effort. There is little to buy beyond daily needs after cigarettes, beer and the football pools have taken their cut of the pay envelopes; only a great deal more money, enough to lift one

[1] "The State of Trade, III—What Makes Workers Work?" *Manchester Guardian Weekly*, Dec. 9, 1948.

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into another social class, would make any real difference, and this is unattainable. Skill brings little premium over unskilled labor. And there is still the fear—the heritage of the depression—that if one works too hard one will only work oneself out of a job.

There are ways of getting increased production, beside the flippant proposal to put a greyhound racing track at every pithead. The "gospel of work" can be preached, as the *Economist* does in and out of season, but only a new type of working man will listen. At present the old aversion to "having the watch put on one" remains, and much diplomacy is needed to persuade the men to change their methods of work according to the results of time-and-motion studies, and to allow themselves to be "redeployed" at their tasks even when, as the experiment in the card room at Musgrave Mill, Bolton, in 1947 showed, their own earnings will be increased. There is a need to give the working man a much greater sense of the importance of his work, a feeling of participation in the entire enterprise of his factory or his firm; companies which honestly make use of the works councils and joint production committees which were developed during the war (instead of accepting them reluctantly as mere window-dressing) have had real rewards from them. This demands a new spirit in management, and a new type of manager, trained for the job, not a well-intentioned amateur; the profession of management is growing, and with encouragement from labor theorists. Beyond this, the re-equipment and replanning of factories can doubtless do much to increase output, although the experience of mechanization in the coal mines has been that, without the good will of the men, this alone accomplishes little, except to lighten the job. And there is the question whether the policies which devote so much of the national income to the social services and to the building of houses, and which seem to discourage thrift, are leaving enough for capital investment in industry.

In any case, the worker is no longer the forgotten man under a Labor government; that role now belongs to the middle class, the new poor—or so the Conservatives say; and therein lies Labor's heaviest liability. The "passion for equality" is such that any differential reward for enterprise or ability is denied, and the middle class left, as a phrasemaker on the *New Statesman* put it, with noth-

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ing but the "greatest and least perishable of all luxuries, self-pity." Of course, it is not as bad as that; but Labor is in danger of losing the support of the middle class, to which it owed its victory in 1945, because of this feeling of grievance. Its sources are varied and obscure. Salaries have increased less than wages; the income tax presses heavily on the salaried man, less so upon the worker. The things on which the middle class spent much of its income have increased in price: the purchase or lease of a house; private schools; clothes, holidays, domestic service. Controlled rents and subsidized food prices are more of a benefit to the working man than to the member of the middle class; the enlarged social services help him, but do not offset his other losses. He suspects that the nation's (i. e., the worker's) precious standard of living is being maintained by sacrifices which come only from him; that the policy of "fair shares," necessary while food supplies are limited, has become a fetish whose dictates demand austerity of him alone. Labor's article of faith, that no one should have less than £500 a year, he sees as meaning that no one should have more either. Nobody loves him, except the newspapers and the highbrow periodicals.

These feelings may be groundless: they are not, therefore, negligible. Labor has not done much to or for the members of the middle class; it has not even threatened much, in spite of Shinwell's aside, since retracted, that he did not care a "tinker's cuss" for them. What is threatened is their status, which has depended on differences in education, furniture and design of houses, clothes, recreation. In an equalitarian society these distinctions tend to disappear, except for the wealthy (for *they* survive at the price of higher taxes and a capital levy); and the middle class is uneasy, not only because such things are menaced, but because they are condemned as immoral and undeserved.

It is matters such as these which should keep the makers of party policy awake at nights: the future of the middle class under socialism, the questions of production and incentive, the implications of nationalization. There are signs of a change in the thinking of socialists. One writer criticizes the government for the failure to inspire the people by its record of things done, and observes that some of its policies have actually diminished, not increased, democratic partic-

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ipation in government, for example, by transferring such services as the distribution of electricity from local government bodies to public boards of nationalized industries.[2] Another urges the maintenance of private enterprise by attacks upon monopoly, and the increase of incentive through differential wages; but he seems to contradict himself by asking, at the same time, for a wider diffusion of private property both by the payment to all of a "social dividend" and by higher taxes on large bequests, a capital levy, and a surtax on all incomes over £500.[3]

This same confusion recurs in the *New Statesman's* series on "Socialist Stocktaking."[4] It admits that the mixed economy rather than complete socialism will be the pattern for some time to come, and calls for little more nationalization, except for some of the activities of the "City." It sees as most urgent the problem of human relations, the bridging of the gap between the people and the state, the workers and the managers. It recognizes the importance of the "new class of technicians and scientists," the salaried administrators who are the managerial class in public and private enterprise; and it thinks that, by recognizing it as an indispensable partner in economic democracy, the middle class antipathy to socialism can be cured.[5] Yet the means for "bridging the human gap" which it proposes is a further attack on class privilege, and especially its two fortresses, education and the law. This is to attack the bases of status for the middle class; and if denied both status and higher income, what is to attract it to socialism? While decrying the class war, the *New Statesman's* master-mind would revive it; he wants to eat his cake and have it, to satisfy the worker by attacking privilege, and still to enjoy the support of those deprived of it. This is really a confession that the Labor party cannot serve the middle class also; if true, it will cost the party the next election. It would be more in the

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[2] D. G. MacRae, "Domestic Record of the Labour Government," *Political Quarterly*, XX (1949), 1-11.

[3] J. E. Meade, "Next Steps in Domestic Economic Policy," *Political Quarterly*, XX (1949), 12-24.

[4] *New Statesman and Nation*, Oct. 23, 30, Nov. 6, 13, 20, 27, 1948.

[5] *Ibid.*, Nov. 20, 1948; also Oct. 30.

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British tradition to offer a compromise: more equality, but not too much; the "social minimum" plus differences in reward and status. The technicians can be wooed and won, but not for a bus driver's wages.

The problem of the Conservatives is somewhat different. They can count on much of the middle class vote without moving a finger for it; they can never get large working class support, however hard they try. But they, like the Socialists, need the support of those in between, the neutrals, the floating vote; the young teachers and businessmen and civil servants who are critical of wealth, sympathetic with labor, and yet still cling to a position, a status, that is not of the working class. Idealism is what will decide their votes, as it did in 1945. Labor has none to offer it now. Its policies, particularly the nationalization of steel, arouse distrust on both practical and theoretical grounds. On the other hand, the Conservatives' only statement of policy, the "Industrial Charter" of 1947, is too indefinite, with its generous promises to maintain free enterprise, restore incentive, curb monopolies, abolish controls, provide security, encourage efficiency, and improve administration in the nationalized industries. "Set the people free" misses the point: free for what?

Probably it is too much to expect the solution of contemporary problems in party programs. The next election will doubtless be fought with the familiar tactics, the well-tested slogans of the past. Labor will defend its record, and attack the Tories as the men of Munich, the ghouls of the dismal thirties; the ghosts of Baldwin and Neville Chamberlain will be summoned again to combat. The Conservatives will gird at the bureaucracy, the muddling, the wastefulness of their opponents, and charge them with aiming at the impoverishment and regimentation of the people. This is the froth of controversy, which misses the real issue: socialism has come to stay, but it has raised more problems than it has solved. It is these which the parties should take thought on; they will not always stay for an answer.

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Return

Ruth T. Grandin

This is the road my heart takes home
Wherever home may be,
This is the valley and the bridge
Connecting earth and me—

That hillside drawing on its edge
My daylight and my dark,
The forest holding the impress
Of snow against its bark,

The brook's midsummer luster spun
In fiber of my bone,
The murmur rounding silence off
Whenever I'm alone,

The very doorstep that provides
The company I keep,
And this the slanting of the roof
Of slumber smooth and deep.

✪ RUTH T. GRANDIN's poetry has appeared in *Green Mountain Verse*. She is a graduate of Smith College.

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Conscience in the Parlor: William Dean Howells

Lloyd Morris

IN THE eighteen-eighties, as he neared his fiftieth year, William Dean Howells prepared to undertake a hazard of new fortunes. Having resigned the editorship of the *Atlantic Monthly*, he resolved to leave Boston, where he had lived happily for two decades, and make his home in New York. During that period many changes were taking place in the life of the nation, and Howells, at first, thought them good. The new industrial age opening for the United States impressed him as an age of promise. He took the hopeful view of the scientists. It was a new phase of evolutionary progress. It would advance democratic opportunity, extend prosperity to all, realize the old American vision of a society based upon equality and dedicated to noble ends.

The tone of Howells' beautiful early novels—the books which had brought him nation-wide fame at home, which had been admired by Turgenev and Tolstoy, and had won a European audience—was buoyant and optimistic. For, facing the American future with unquestioning faith, he had looked at the present with love. In the native scene, where his friend Henry James saw only social aridities, Howells saw the noble substance of the homely and familiar. He asked nothing better than "to take the slightest sort of plot, and lay the scene in the dullest kind of place, and then bring out all the possibilities." For those possibilities would not be dull. The "little everyday things" could be "told so exquisitely" that even if they faded "naturally away without any particular result," the "full meaning of everything would be brought out."

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That this meaning was good, Howells did not doubt. His conscience and his confidence, during his earlier years in Boston, marched together. Like Mark Twain, he felt that, for any American, "the paths to fortune are innumerable and all open; there is invitation in the air and success in all his wide horizons." Others might distrust the increasing worship of bigness, the growing absorption of the country's energies in business and speculation, the general scramble for wealth, the gradual cheapening of standards, the insidious warping of the mind to materialistic ends—but Howells, at first, did not. Henry Adams might lament that there was no longer "means, power or hope of combined action for any unselfish end," but Howells could not agree.

He expressed his view in *The Rise of Silas Lapham*, most generous of all literary portraits of the new captains of industry. Lapham was a self-made millionaire, a producer of paint, and while others might find him vulgar, Howells showed the deep probity of his nature, his creative passion to make his paint the very finest paint possible—and showed, too, how Bromfield Corey, the Boston patrician, came to acknowledge his merit and respect his principles. And if Lapham could make paint yield honor, and even a kind of poetry, why should not others do the same with steel, and railways, and oil? The creative American genius, turning to ways of science, and applying itself to the transformation of physical environment, need not desert its "inner light."

But as time passed, and Howells looked more closely at the drift of American life, his confidence waned and his conscience grew troubled. Industrial strife spread over the land; the gulf between rich and poor was rapidly enlarging; and for every emergent Lapham there appeared to be an equivalent new area of desolation, a factory slum in which men knew no security, but instead starved and miserably perished. Somehow, the new age had betrayed its promise. The old dream of democratic equality was receding. The field of opportunity was narrowing, and for a majority of Americans the outlook no longer was bright with hope. The Haymarket riot of 1886 profoundly shocked him. The subsequent trial of the Chicago anarchists moved him to public protest, despite the personal risk in opposing a popular clamor for vengeance. "The historical perspec-

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tive," he wrote when it was over, "is that this free Republic has killed five men for their opinions." He now felt that "there is no longer an American Republic, but an aristocracy-loving oligarchy in place of it." The American people, who once had taken their ideals of character and conduct from their statesmen, and then from their philosophers and men of letters, had entered a phase of material expansion and sudden towering fortunes—and there was no doubt but that "the millionaire is now the American ideal" of greatness.

In past days, James Russell Lowell had wondered whether Americans, as they espoused industrial and commercial aims, would not become "dispassionate and incapable of electric emotions"; whether they might not, at length, "find it too great a bore to quarrel with great public wrongs"? Howells was to show this fear groundless, in his own case, as another generation of writers were again to do much later. Meanwhile, a group of ardent social reformers was rising—among them Henry George and Edward Bellamy—and his sympathies were with their protest and their aims. He felt compelled to put his art to social use. In a series of novels very unlike his earlier ones, he began trying to portray for his fellow-citizens the gathering injustices that were blackening the American scene. In effect, his purpose was to recall them to their former state of mind, to that good will which Emerson had praised, hailing "their conviction of the great moral advantages of freedom, social equality, education, and religious culture, and their determination to hold these fast."

Howells, during these years, had been reading the later works of Tolstoy, and the Christian socialism of the Russian master affected him more profoundly than Tolstoy's art. The doctrine reminded him of his father's teachings. The elder Howells had been kindled by the vision of Robert Owen, the English founder of a Utopian colony at New Harmony. He had attempted to operate a paper mill, in a forest clearing, according to cooperative principles, and the venture had failed. Nevertheless, though he lived to be a very old man, he never abandoned hope for the attainment of a "true state of things" in which Americans would transform their society into a cooperative commonwealth, in this sharing the dreams of

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Wendell Phillips and the labor leader, Terence Powderly. William Dean Howells, remembering how the cooperative theory had been applied to family life in his childhood, had emphasized the family unity of American life, even in his earlier novels. Vaguely, he had seen the fair, fine aspects of American home life as some day extending to all social relationships. He had always cared most deeply about those aims which unite men in a family, "as private property never does." So when, at last, he declared himself a socialist, the step was less sudden than it seemed. The conditions to which his eyes had been opened, and his reading of Tolstoy, merely invoked those ideas which had been familiar to him in childhood.

Thomas Bailey Aldrich, Howells' associate and successor on the *Atlantic*, had found that in Boston "to be known as an able writer is to have the choicest society open to you." This had proved true for Howells. But, in the light of his new convictions, was it important? "Elinor and I both no longer care for the world's life," he wrote, "and would like to be settled somewhere very humbly and simply, where we could be socially identified with the principles of progress and sympathy for the struggling mass." He wondered whether the position of the artist, in modern society, was not anomalous, and perhaps even a little ridiculous: "Perhaps he will never be at home anywhere as long as there are masses whom he ought to consort with, and classes whom he cannot consort with."

This was Howells' conscience speaking, not his temperament, and it assured him that the prospect was not brilliant for any artist of his own time—"but perhaps the artist of the future will see in the flesh the accomplishment of that human equality of which the instinct has been divinely planted in the human soul." He expressed an abhorrence of "civilization." More than any of his contemporaries, he had believed that it would "come out all right in the end." He knew now that it would not. It would, indeed, come out all wrong, "unless it bases itself anew on a real equality." As for himself, an artist, he concluded that "it is very well to be confronted with ugly realities, the surviving savageries, that the smug hypocrisy of civilization denies; for till we recognize them we shall not abate them, or even try to do so."

It was conscience and conviction which made him abandon Bos-

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ton for New York. The first novel that he wrote in his new environment, *A Hazard of New Fortunes,* was framed by a record of his own inward experience. "It became, to my thinking, the most vital of my fictions; through my quickened interest in the life about me, at a moment of great psychological import," he said later. A violent street-car strike broke out in New York, "and the story began to find its way to issues nobler and larger than those of the love-affairs common to fiction." The issue which Howells tried to project was that between wage-slavery—"the slavery implicated in our liberty" —and social democracy. The character of the millionaire Dryfoos showed how far along the road of social criticism he had come since writing *The Rise of Silas Lapham.* As compared with his previous work, the tone of this book was dark. The "little everyday things" no longer impressed him as being universally fair. If the surface of life showed pleasant, he would never forget that underneath there existed a black abyss of cruelty.

He was too intelligent an artist, however, not to realize that his personal experience equipped him only inadequately for the function of an American Zola, to which his conscience was impelling him. The portrayal of class conflicts on an epic scale was beyond his reach. He therefore took a hint from the work of Edward Bellamy, and the English poet, William Morris, and expressed his social criticism in two Utopian romances, *A Traveller From Altruria* and *Through the Eye of the Needle,* which exempted him from any requirements of realism.

These books masked with a deceptive and urbane irony Howells' attack on the conditions which provoked his indignation. But his purpose was deadly serious, and Howells' beautiful art proved equal to his intention. The visiting Altrurian, citizen of a socialist commonwealth, comes to investigate the "most advanced country of its time," and during his observation of it holds a series of Socratic conversations with various types of its citizenry. To them, he seems very like a bad conscience. He tests the democratic assumptions of the United States by the reality which he sees. The American democratic assumptions are identical with those of Altruria—but in Altruria, practice illustrates profession. In the United States, the Altrurian learns that it does not. The disparity of democratic princi-

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ples and plutocratic practice is revealed again and again. Social injustice and ruthless exploitation are excused by teachers, clergymen, lawyers; the best minds are trapped in a moral morass of complicity. Howells attempted to forecast the course of future reform—the ultimate replacement of competition by cooperation, of rugged individualism by social altruism.

But he saw quite clearly that no merely external change of conditions can bring this about. It requires nothing less than a reorientation of the spirit of men. As he wrote to his father during an outbreak of savage industrial warfare, the troubles "must go on as long as competition goes on; they are themselves an essential part of competition." Alone among his contemporaries, Howells understood that mere "reform" is not enough—that the shape of the external world is made by the state of men's souls.

As Howells' preoccupation with social issues deepened, his concern with the state of soul of his characters increased. His earlier work had taken benevolence and benignity for granted. His later work raised questions. The social issues often did not appear directly; they were represented by problems of conscience or conduct. The "little everyday things" carried overtones of implication. In his world, the minute now stood for the large—as it had in the world of Jane Austen, for whose work he had a lifelong admiration and love.

In *The Landlord at Lion's Head*, for example, he told the story of a simple New England farm which, over the years, was transformed into an expensive, fashionable summer hotel. But, in the character of Jeff Durgin, the "landlord," he studied the moral character of the materialistically successful American. Jeff had an "earthbound temperament," but in it was "the potentiality of all the success it aimed at." "The acceptance of the moral fact as it was, without the unconscious effort to better it, or to hold himself strictly to account for it, was the secret of the power in the man which would bring about the material results he desired; and this simplicity of the motive had its charm." Jeff's morality was fully expressed by his conviction that "you pay, or you don't pay, just as it happens." In Jeff, the old American moral sense had given way to a realistic view of affairs uncolored by any ethical preconceptions. And was

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not Jeff's psychology that of the eminent models of American success—the Carnegies, Hills, Schwabs, and their like?

Howells carried the problem into the next generation in *The Son of Royal Langbrith*. What would happen when the children of the "robber barons" were confronted with the true nature of the parents whom they had been taught to venerate? Howells saw two things which most social critics ignored. Many of the "robber barons" had established reputations for large-scale philanthropy. Their children, brought up remote from the arena of savage competition, were educated by the old culture and thus inoculated with traditional ideals. Royal Langbrith was a public benefactor and a private scoundrel. Shall his heir expose him, or violate conscience by nourishing the public legend which commemorates his benefactions and conceals the tragic social results of his misdeeds? Howells' solution for this problem was strictly Tolstoyan: Let God, not man, judge and punish. The book closes with the conventions upheld, lest a worse disaster occur—and with young Langbrith, from the highest ethical motives, lending himself to an hypocrisy which he despises. The second generation will continue the benefactions of the first. Its conscience will be even more guilty. Will social restitution be accomplished in full? Howells suggests no answer.

"I see a great deal of Mark Twain nowadays, and we have high good times denouncing everything," Howells wrote to his sister at the turn of the century. "We agree perfectly about the Boer war, and the Filipino war, and war generally. Then, we are old fellows, and it is pleasant to find the world so much worse than it was when we were young." It was not, really, pleasant for Howells. But he learned to live with his social disillusion, and possibly this was made easier for him because, unlike Mark Twain, he had given no personal hostages to the forces which his conscience made him indict. Then, too, believing that external change results only from a change in the state of men's souls, he could look at American life and still find areas in which the state of the soul was good. The serene and hopeful artist of his middle years survived, and co-existed with the unhappy social critic of his old age.

Because this was the case, the best work of his old age equaled in charm, and exceeded in power, that which first won him fame. When

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his conscience awoke to social injustice, he thought he would never again write a story "in which mating and marrying play an important part"; he was too old for the subject, and it no longer seemed a vital one. But in his later work he returned to love as a central theme with some frequency, and brought to it an insight and a perception of complexity that he had never before displayed. In some of the stories of *Questionable Shapes* and *Between the Dark and the Daylight*, in *Miss Bellard's Inspiration* and *Fennel and Rue*, he recorded those darker aspects of love—its possessiveness, its cruelty, its ambivalence—which analytical psychology was later to explore.

The masterpiece of his old age was *The Kentons*. This novel reaffirmed his faith in one area of American life—the small Middle Western city which, twenty years later, Sinclair Lewis was to arraign—and revived his original thesis that "wherever life is simplest and purest and kindest, that is the highest civilization." It took Howells back to the province that was peculiarly his own, the broad sphere of American middle-class existence, and studied the loyalty, affection and unity which, in his view, gave American family life its peculiar tone and special moral value. Quite rightly, Henry James called it "that perfectly classic illustration of your spirit and your form." But other critics were not so kindly. The reviewer for the *Atlantic* thought that Howells' simple Americans were "the monstrous offspring of barbarous and illicit social relations," and protested that to pursue them intently was "like riding in pink, and with winding of horns, to a hunt of cockroaches!" This reviewer was Miss Harriet Waters Preston, herself a New England novelist, the translator of Sainte-Beuve, and a scholarly authority in the field of Provençal poetry. At the moment, a romantic reaction had set in, and the public cared only for novels like *Janice Meredith*, *Monsieur Beaucaire*, *To Have and to Hold*, and the books of F. Marion Crawford. Howells' middle-class Americans were caustically dismissed as "commonplace people."

"I had hoped that I was helping my people to know themselves in the delicate beauty of their everyday lives, and to find cause for pride in the loveliness of an apparently homely average, but they don't want it," Howells told Brander Matthews. He confessed him-

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self disheartened, and when Charles Eliot Norton sent him some early letters of Henry James in which James had discussed Howells' limitations as a novelist, Howells was driven to meditate the whole of his career. He found James's strictures very just, he told Norton. "He speaks of me with my style, and such mean application as I was making of it, as seeming to him like a poor man with a diamond which he does not know what to do with." Perhaps he *had* cut only rather inferior window glass with it. "But I am not sorry for having wrought in common, crude material so much that is the right American stuff; and perhaps hereafter, when my din is done, if anyone is curious to know what that noise was, it will be found to have proceeded from a small insect which was scraping about on the surface of our life and trying to get into its meaning for the sake of the other insects larger or smaller."

During his editorship of the *Atlantic Monthly*, Howells had fought to create an audience for realistic fiction. In later years he continued the battle from the "Easy Chair" of *Harper's Magazine*. There, he systematically championed the novels of a rising generation of American writers more bitterly disillusioned than himself—writers who felt the need of a realism far more drastic than his: Hamlin Garland, Stephen Crane, Frank Norris, Robert Herrick. He had been their precursor and, in a sense, their master also. He had explored the territory which was to give them their subjects. He had developed the method which they were to apply with a greater fearlessness. And this leadership brought about the withering of his own laurels. The public that he had prepared for his successors soon began to account his own work old-fashioned. A collected edition of Howells' books was launched, and presently was abandoned.

In 1915, he was writing sadly to Henry James: "I am comparatively a dead cult with my statues cut down and the grass growing over them in the pale moonlight." In his seventy-ninth year, his publishers rejected one of his stories. He did not protest, but remarked that "in fifty years the inevitable acceptance of my work everywhere had perhaps spoiled me for refusal." The passage of time transforms all literary innovators into academicians, and this was what had happened to Howells. "I am nearly eighty years old, and tired, tired," he told the novelist Henry B. Fuller. "It is a strange

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experience. I used only to need the chance for work; now the chance dismays me." He quietly accepted the verdict of the day, and acknowledged that "my sort of fiction is no longer desired."

But, three decades after his death, Americans, if they could be persuaded to read his books, might find that Howells still had something to say to them. In his later work, he spoke from an anxiety no less acute than their own. The problems which troubled his conscience had not been solved, and others of even graver import burdened the spirit of a generation that had forgotten him. Yet Howells, facing the troubles of his time with honest realism, had faced them also with courage and had achieved serenity. His books counseled Americans not to ignore their problems, and not to despair because of them. He suggested a ground for hope in "the fruitful fields of our common life"; a ground for faith in the energy of the American will and the vitality of the American conscience. The good fight, he intimated, might yet be won.

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Cleopatra and the Roman Chamber of Commerce

Alvin S. Johnson

NUNC *est bibendum*. Let's drink and dance, for Cleopatra is dead. It had been sin and treason to make merry while the dread Egyptian monster was threatening mad ruin to the Capitol and the Empire.

When first we scanned this Ode of Horace (I, 37), we took it as an example of poetic exaggeration. What could a queen of remote Egypt with her "contaminated flock of disgusting men" do against the might of Rome, now consolidated under Augustus? Her slave, Mark Antony, was, it is true, reputed to be, after Julius Caesar, the greatest general of his time. But no general could make out of effeminate Egyptians and mercenary Levantines an army that could face the Roman legions.

And yet, not only the poets, but resolute Roman senators feared Cleopatra. There was a power in her, indeed, that menaced the Capitol. What was it?

Was it the power of beauty, as popular romance would have it?

> Je croyais voir la belle Cléopâtre,
> Qui, nous dit on,
>
> Menait Césare, l'Empereur d'Allemagne
> Par le licou. (*Hugo*, "Guitare.")

What Cleopatra looked like, we may judge from her face on coins.

ALVIN S. JOHNSON describes himself as an exile from the world of the classics, where since childhood he has felt most at home, to the field of economics and politics. In the latter he has held professorships in several American universities, and later was one of the founders of the New School for Social Research, from which he retired as first president in 1946.

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One sometimes doubts the authenticity of likenesses on coins, but in Cleopatra's time the art of portraiture and the technique of coinage were highly developed in Egypt. What we see is a good brow, a nose too prominent, lips pouting as if over teeth that should have been straightened, chin too sharp, cheeks somewhat depressed. Not a face to launch a thousand ships.

Nor does the literature of the period set Cleopatra down as a second Helen. Ovid, expert in fair women, presents no glowing picture of her. Neither does Horace, who grudgingly grants her strength and courage beyond the range of women. Vergil, in modeling Dido on Cleopatra, makes her strong and ambitious, but omits to clothe her in beauty. It required all the skulduggery of the golden-throne Aphrodite to bring the stalwart Aeneas to Dido's arms.

Shakespeare has two hypotheses, the vulgar and the refined. The vulgar hypothesis is that great men like Caesar and Mark Antony were chained to Cleopatra by the flaming attraction of "a gypsy's lust." The refined hypothesis makes Cleopatra an irresistibly interesting person, like Queen Elizabeth:

> Age cannot wither her, nor custom stale
> Her infinite variety. . .

Cleopatra spent much time in Rome with Caesar. He certainly did not keep her hidden from the wits and poets of the city. If she had been supremely brilliant, tradition would have drawn a comparison with Aspasia, also a foreigner who could not be lawfully married to a citizen, and also the inspiration of a great statesman, Pericles. We find no such comparison.

According to the antique account, Cleopatra introduced herself to Caesar rolled up in a priceless oriental rug, which he took at first to be a conventional princely gift. Unrolled, the rug disclosed the girl, clad very lightly, if at all. No doubt she was very attractive. Most girls of twenty are. It may be that Cleopatra made an instant impression, although at that moment Caesar was in the tightest spot of his reckless life, clinging with his skeleton forces to the Pharos islet, while all Egypt was apparently rising to destroy him. Caesar managed, by audacity and diplomacy and luck, to break through the

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ring of Egyptian soldiers and to reduce the kingdom to his will. H. G. Wells deplores the fact that Caesar spent six months there, philandering with that twenty-year-old girl.

Perhaps Caesar wasted time on Cleopatra. Let us remember, however, that Egypt was relatively to Rome what India was to eighteenth-century England—and more, Egypt was the secure reserve of corn for the Eastern Mediterranean, and even for Rome itself. The best shipbuilders of the age were the Egyptians. The arts and crafts were developed beyond the imagination of a Roman, producing objects of art and luxury fascinating to behold and a wonder to possess. Through the Red Sea, Egyptian merchants carried on trade with the fabulous lands of the East and brought home in quantity gold and pearls and precious stones, spices and perfumes, and above all, that marvelous sheer textile, silk, which only the bolder ladies had the face to wear. Caesar reduced Egypt to the condition of a secure Roman possession within six months. The British conquest of India, even partial, required a half-century.

Caesar was fifty-five when he first encountered Cleopatra. He was no emotionally starved anchorite to lose his head over a girl of twenty. Puritanism was not a characteristic of the Roman gentleman. The slave markets of Rome were packed with beautiful captives of every nation; and there was no public reprobation for the buyer, if he could afford the expense. In his *Commentaries* Caesar does not drop a hint that he had had amorous conquests as well as military. But when his legions paraded through Rome the soldiers chanted: "Citizens, lock up your wives. Great Caesar has come to town."

Mark Antony was younger, perhaps forty-seven, when on an expedition for military supplies into Cilicia he found Cleopatra, now twenty-eight, lying in wait for him, to carry him off to Egypt. Neither was he an amorously inexperienced man. In the early days of the Triumvirate his conduct had been so flagrant that Octavius, himself no saint, had to protest. Antony's reply is extant. The purport of it is "Mind your own business. Do I protest about your Drusillas and Savillas, your Chloes and Meroes? What is it to me that you take your pleasure in this or that neglected garden?"

Regretfully, we must dismiss the romantic conception of Cleopatra's compelling beauty.

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Ambition, some wise poet remarks, is the last infirmity of a noble mind. It is also the first. Caesar was ambitious, and so was Cleopatra. There was a fated relation between the two ambitions that made them leap together like the reciprocal emotions in love at first sight.

There is a tradition that Caesar, in his middle thirties, went through a terrible crisis of despair. He had reached the age at which Alexander died, and had accomplished nothing. Alexander had conquered half the known world, and was prepared to go on to the conquest of the rest, when death overtook him.

After another bootless ten years, Caesar got his chance in Gaul. The conquest of Gaul and the successful though fruitless invasions of Britain and Germany might have slaked the ambition of any man not obsessed with the Alexander myth. The power Caesar had acquired in Gaul enabled him to become supreme dictator of Rome. That should have been enough.

But he knew the East, and realized that in population, wealth, magnificence of cities, the arts of civilization, Rome was nothing compared with the East. The Romans might boast of the greatness of their city, but what was it as compared with Alexandria, monument to Alexander the Great? What were its palaces, its temples? Augustus was later to boast that he had found Rome constructed of *opus reticulata*, a commonplace brick or tile material, and had left it marble.

Cleopatra's ambition was far more deeply rooted. She was undiluted Greek of the vigorous Macedonian strain, the Ptolemies having adopted and maintained the law of the Egyptian ruling house, by which the heir apparent had to marry his own sister. Thus Cleopatra's blood was mathematically one-half Ptolemy. And Ptolemy's blood was believed to be one-half Philip of Macedon, as was that of Philip's legitimate son, Alexander the Great.

In the division of Alexander's empire among his generals, Ptolemy drew what was regarded as the richest prize, Egypt. With a dense and industrious population, Egypt afforded revenue in profusion. It was protected on east and west by deserts no invading army could cross, and very little military force was needed to check invasion from the Sudan or from the Syrian lands. A Jewish colony had been planted at Elephantiné, far South in Egypt, to take the

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brunt of Sudanese attack, just as an early Pharaoh had planted a famous Jewish colony in the Land of Goshen, to take the brunt of recurrent Hittite and Assyrian invasions.

But if Egypt meant security, it also meant stagnation to ambitious rulers. There was no profit in military expeditions to the South, and the Mediterranian coast from Gaza to Cilicia had belonged to the Seleucidae and their various usurping successors. This was the tract of land that offered an open road to Mesopotamia, Persia, Afghanistan and India.

The Ptolemies had for three hundred years hungered for this middle division of Alexander's empire. Repeatedly, the Ptolemies invaded the region whenever its lawful rulers showed weakness. On several occasions, the Ptolemies carried their arms through Palestine to Damascus and the Lebanon, and on one occasion got as far as Babylon. But always they were thrown back by a resurgence of military power under the successors of Seleucus.

This was the ambition that animated Cleopatra—the restoration of the whole vast empire of Alexander, and its extension into the unknown East and the West. The Romans had broken the power of Macedonia and of the central empire. They had never organized these vast territories as secure provinces. The peoples were still there, some of them, like the Macedonians, Cappadocians, Armenians, Carducchi, with great military potentialities, and all better adjusted to Greek rule than to Roman.

By intrigue combined with military prowess, a great empire could be put together. Cleopatra, even at twenty, was a past mistress of intrigue. Was she not able to pull together an army in Syria to put her brother off the throne? But to win the mastery of the world, military genius was needed. What so mighty a military genius existed as Julius Caesar? Cleopatra needed Caesar. And Caesar, to reach the height of his ambition, needed Cleopatra. He could not work the Greek world without the aid of one who knew its wishes and sentiments, its ideals and treacheries, better than he could know them.

But Cleopatra and Caesar knew that a world empire could not be won and worked from Rome, far away in the primitive West. The logical seat of empire was obviously Byzantium. From Byzantium it would be possible to control Anatolia, and to attack Persia through

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the Black Sea and the passes of the Caucasus. The Crimea and the Dobrudja had long been producing great wheat surpluses for the thin-soiled countries bordering the Aegean. The southern shore of the Black Sea was rich in building timber and iron. Above all, there was a large warlike population near at hand—Macedonians, Thracians, Scythians—who could be incorporated in the Roman legions, easily doubling the mighty Roman military force.

When it came to be noised around Rome (Suetonius, *Caesar*) that Caesar was planning to remove the seat of empire to Byzantium, we may surmise that the plebeians, the trading classes, welcomed the idea. The East was the place to make money. According to Cicero's oration on the Manilian Law, placing Pompey in command of an expedition against Mithridates, eighty thousand Roman citizens were doing business in Asia Minor alone. If they could prosper under the suspicious and treacherous local potentates, what gains could they not harvest under the secure might of Rome planted on the Bosporus?

The patricians saw the project in a different light. Excluded by law from trading and money lending, they had based their economy on landed property. They owned most of the real estate in the city, and were enjoying a boom with the constant influx to Rome from all over Italy, and also from Greece, Spain and Gaul. The protector of real estate was the Senate, which had become little more than a real estate chamber of commerce.

Caesar wished to remove the capital to Byzantium. That meant stark ruin for real estate. Caesar had to be rubbed out.

But Cleopatra was not through. Of the Triumvirate that seized power after Caesar's assassination, Mark Antony looked most like a man. Cleopatra seized upon him, only to find that he was an idle chaser after pleasures, who philandered with her ambition instead of mating with it. After his two stupidly mismanaged campaigns in Asia Minor, Cleopatra realized that she had backed the wrong horse. She should have taken Octavius. Well, it was perhaps not too late.

We have no record whatever of Cleopatra's intrigues with Octavius, and the terms on which she agreed to bring Antony into Octavius' trap at Actium. Historians have marveled at Cleopatra's strange conduct in heading straight back for Egypt with her private galleys as soon as battle was joined, and Antony's infatuated behavior

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in streaking after her, letting his fleet go hang. We may marvel at the historians.

By having word sent to Antony that she had committed suicide, Cleopatra got Antony out of the way, by suicide, as she knew she could. She waited for Octavius to fulfill his side of the contract. But she got information that Octavius was welching, and meant to parade her in his triumph at Rome. That ended Cleopatra.

The project of Byzantium still lived in Rome, to torment the real estate interest. Octavius, now Caesar Augustus, took strong measures to dissociate himself from the idea. He married into real estate, and had his noble poet Vergil announce in *Aeneid*, Book VI, that he held the Byzantium idea in horror.

Old Anchises, in the nether world, prophesies to his son Aeneas the most tremendous future for Rome, provided that the Romans avoided forever the accursed site of Troy (read Byzantium); Horace (*Odes*, III, 3) offers the same assurance to real estate.

The idea of Byzantium was tenacious of life, and seems to have found lodgment in the mind of the son of the beloved Germanicus, Caligula. It was necessary to smear him with charges of the most horrid Eastern vices, and rub him out. Nor was Nero free from suspicion of hankering after the East. Besides, he had attacked real estate directly.

In the boom years an apartment building at Rome was a gold mine. Apartment rose above apartment, each extending a little farther out over the twenty-foot street, until at the ninth floor a one-legged Romeo could have jumped across the street into the arms of Juliet. The Great Fire jumped the street everywhere.

Nero fiddled, they said, while Rome burned. There was nothing else for him to do. He sent the Praetorian Guard to fight the fire, but there was no water. The real estate men had tapped the aqueducts for fountains and picturesque winding brooks and extensive fish ponds. When the fire had burned itself out, Nero set up a new building code. Above the first story, an apartment building had to be set back twenty feet; and tapping the aqueducts without license was made a capital offense.

Of course, Nero had to be smeared with slander and rubbed out.

The logic of Byzantium finally prevailed, with Constantine, but

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too late. Italy was no longer producing the kind of officers and men who made the legion invincible. The ravages of planned non-parenthood had eaten the substance out of the Roman people. There was no longer the iron-spirited soldier, who could scale a wall and fight on furiously though stuck through with arrows and an eye shot out, as at Caesar's siege of Durachium. At the time of Constantine, there was not one authentic living representative of the Scipios, Catos, Sullas, the Fabii, Cincinnati, Reguli, Ahenobarbi, nor indeed of any single figure in Livy's history. What was left was a soft and querulous strain too weak either to build or to destroy.

What might have been is a kind of inquiry taboo to the professional historian. We are amateurs, and may be permitted to amuse ourselves with the speculation. Suppose Cleopatra had won.

Caesar was sixty-five, but that is merely the age of maturity in a statesman. He was of a long-lived stock, and might have ruled from Byzantium for twenty years.

In twenty years he would have made great headway in assimilating the warlike Macedonians and Thracians to Roman citizenship, the Latin language and service in the legion, doubling the effective military strength of Rome. He was raising up a son, Caesarion, illegitimate like the first Ptolemy, and carrying the blood and ambition of Caesar and the Ptolemies.

No ruler of Byzantium with double Roman military power would have permitted the Scythians and Sarmatians to gallop over the frozen Danube and massacre the peaceful inhabitants of what are now Bulgaria and Jugoslavia. A second Caesar would have made a second Gaul from the Danube to the Baltic and the Urals. The two Gauls between them would have squeezed the Germans into the shape of a thick-fingered, thick-tongued Romance people.

Such an empire would not have stopped at the Euphrates, but would have followed the track of Alexander to the Indus, and on into the Ganges territory, Burma and Siam. One great civilization would have covered the earth from the Firth of Forth to the Irawaddy, from the Arctic to the Sahara.

If only Cleopatra had won!

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Restoration in the Wasatch

Bernard DeVoto

MOST tourists who cross Utah by automobile travel the whole length of Davis County. Twenty-two miles long from south to north, the county lies between the two largest Utah towns, Salt Lake City and Ogden; the drive between them is spectacularly beautiful. To the east the Wasatch Mountains thrust up a mile-high wall. To the west is Great Salt Lake, accurately described as "a desert of water." Its salt shore is blinding white in sunlight, its salt water an amazing sapphire blue.

From east to west the valley strip between the Wasatch and Great Salt Lake is nowhere more than fifteen miles wide; it averages barely five miles. There are fields of sugar beets, grains, alfalfa. There are truck gardens that supply the neighboring cities with vegetables, and even richer orchards. And the countryside is riotous with trees, which shade-thirsty men have planted against the desert sun. There are eight or nine villages, and here there is almost an explosion of trees, or lawns, or flower gardens.

It is the most intensively cultivated agricultural land in Utah. Few farms anywhere else in the state are as valuable as these, none more valuable. And part of its beauty on any summer morning is the water flowing in irrigation canals. Only water has made the farmland green. Without it there would be no fields, no orchards, no crops, no villages.

For Davis County is a desert. In this latitude it takes a minimum of twenty inches of rainfall a year to grow crops. On the valley floor the annual rainfall averages fifteen. To the westward, beyond the Great Salt Lake, there are only four or five inches of rain a year, less than the Sahara gets, and for hundreds of miles the land

✪ The latest book, *Across the Wide Missouri*, of BERNARD DEVOTO, author and editor, was published in 1947. Mr. DeVoto is a member of the Advisory Committee on Conservation to the Secretary of the Interior and of the Advisory Board on National Parks.

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is absolute desolation. But the Wasatch Mountains provide the water that gives life to land that would be sterile without it. On the heights of the Wasatch, rain and snow together amount to between forty and fifty inches of water, the water that has made twenty-two miles of level valley the richest land in Utah.

It comes out of the mountains in creeks that flow down canyons and debouch on the foothills. From here it is distributed over the farms by an irrigation system that has cost the labor and wealth of generations. Downhill from any lateral canal there is a rich, almost choked productivity: berries, fruits, vegetables, trees, grass, flowers. Take one step uphill from that same lateral and you are in the vegetation of the desert—cactus, sagebrush, rabbitbush, smokeweed. From barrenness to civilization, from death to life, is only a single step. And the step always has to be taken across a ditch that is flowing water.

Water, the creator of life, can also be a destroyer.

In Utah west of the Wasatch Mountains, summers are very dry, but usually the drought is broken at intervals in July or August by violent thunderstorms. At the beginning of a storm the rate of fall may be up to six and a half inches an hour. For those few minutes the rain is like a solid wall.

Such cloudbursts have been known to the people of Utah ever since the Mormon pioneers under Brigham Young reached Salt Lake Valley (of which Davis County is a part) in 1847. But shortly after 1900, in some places they, or rather their results, began to be different. People noticed that after summer cloudbursts the creeks rose much higher than they used to, subsided much sooner, were more turbid, carried more debris, did more damage—though as yet the damage was slight and marginal. A few understood what was happening, but nothing is easier than to remain unaware of gradual processes.

Then abruptly Davis County rounded a turn that headed it straight back toward the desert from which it had been wrested. On August 14, 1923, a cloudburst struck the western front of the Wasatch. Within a few minutes after the storm broke, five of seven canyons above the narrowest part of the valley floor poured out over the

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farms floods immeasurably larger than Davis County had ever seen. Moreover, they were the most terrifying kind of mountain flood, the kind that is called a mud flow. High up on a mountainside, a slope of bare earth has collapsed under the sudden assault of the cloudburst. A torrent of fearful stuff that looks like thick cement starts flowing downhill. Every foot of slope gives it more momentum, and it gets more still as the collapsing mountainside behind it shoves it on. When it reaches the bottom of the canyon, the narrow walls act like the nozzle on a hose and multiply its power many times.

The area struck that August day runs northward from a village called Centerville past another called Farmington. In a single hour, five floods or mud flows spread over some of the richest farms in Utah. They crushed houses, barns, schools. They severed irrigation canals and filled them with mud. They broke railroad lines, telegraph and telephone lines, state highways, burying them deep under rocks and mud. They killed six people. Over hundreds of acres of farmland they deposited mud, gravel, rocks and giant boulders weighing up to 200 tons apiece. In some places this deposit was six feet deep—and wherever it is more than a few inches, it destroys the land's fertility. In many places it was so deep that no one could afford the cost of removing it.

Prompt public relief was provided for those who suffered in the floods of 1923. Few people realized even then that Davis County had entered a period of prolonged crisis. But every summer brought new floods from the canyons, though not on the same scale, until fear began to spread among the people of the Farmington-Centerville area, and economic decline set in. Farmers could not pay the interest on their mortgages, still less the principal. So banks refused to accept real estate as security for loans; it became harder to finance farming operations, and harder to keep irrigation systems in repair. Real estate agents refused to list farms for sale. Relief rolls lengthened, bank deposits dried up. Meanwhile the land itself deteriorated just as steadily.

In the summer of 1930, the wasting disease came to crisis. A July cloudburst brought mud flows out of all five canyons in the area that had flooded in 1923, on a greater scale than ever before, and out of a sixth canyon that had not previously flooded, this last one

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more destructive by far than any of the others. As the summer went on, there were more cloudbursts, and more floods came rushing out of canyons. Some streams poured four mud-rock flows apiece over the helpless land during that summer.

Davis County was poised on the brink of destruction, and the state of Utah was roused to a realization that much of its richest farmland—and so its whole economy and social structure—were in deadly peril. It was roused, too, to a realization that the problem was not local, not confined to Utah, but Western and even national, and that all resources of knowledge must be focused on its solution. Relief agencies were put to work, and the power and purse of Congress were invoked.

At the direction of the legislature, the governor appointed a commission to study the causes of this destruction and to bring every kind of scientific, engineering and practical knowledge to bear on the question of whether it could be halted. The commission made an exhaustive study and brought in a report. With that report, the way to the salvation of Davis County was made clear.

The report was the work of many hands. So was the drama that followed. Some of the actors stood out, but hundreds of people had a hand. Here was a concerted and cooperative drive to a common goal, an effort that can be truly called that of a whole community.

What had happened? What had caused these floods? Why was Davis County returning to the desert? The flood commission's study made it very clear that not nature, but the inhabitants of Davis County were responsible.

When rain falls or snow melts, the water must either sink into the ground or run off downhill. That which is absorbed by the ground nourishes vegetation and builds up the subterranean water supply. The soil is held in place and made absorbent by the vegetation that covers it. Trees, brush, shrubs, plants, grass, the litter of their fallen leaves and decayed stems—these are the great protectors of the soil. They hold it firm against wind and runoff. They break the force of falling rain and slow it up: slow-moving water is absorbed. They keep the soil granular and porous: it will take up more water. Their roots make branching channels to lead water deep into the ground.

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On a well-vegetated hillside, a heavy rain will be almost or fully absorbed; the ground may be soaked to the depth of a foot and a half. On bare patches of that same slope, almost all the water may run off, and the ground will be dry only an inch or so below the surface.

That is what had happened to the watersheds of the creeks that flow down the Wasatch to the Davis County farms. The scanty timber of the west face of the mountains had been entirely logged off, but this was only a minor cause. A more important cause was a long series of brush and grass fires over the years that had destroyed the plant cover. Much more important was the fact that for many years the people of Davis County had grazed too many cattle and sheep on the slopes of the Wasatch and in their mountain meadows. Every area of grazing land has a capacity to feed so many livestock—a number that can be almost exactly calculated—without being harmed. If only the proper number graze it, the grass, herbage and browse will completely reproduce themselves every year. But when more than the proper number graze any area, the nutritious and soil-preserving plants slowly thin and eventually disappear. Bare patches of hillside appear. They harden, and when they dry, the wind blows the soil away, and when rain falls it runs off, carrying the soil with it. The bare patches widen, gullies begin to form; every wind and every rain widen and deepen the gullies. The land will stand up under hard misuse for a long time; but when it begins to go, it goes fast.

On the watershed of every creek that had flooded Davis County, the experts found bare slopes of eroded earth. Some of them were small, only a few acres in extent; some of them were larger. In the Farmington area, all told, they added up to only 1,300 acres. But all the damage that had been done in that area originated on those 1,300 acres, about two square miles. When the terrific downpour of summer cloudbursts hit those patches of bare, hardened and gullied earth, the water rushed down to the creeks below, carrying the soil and gravel and boulders of the mountainsides with it. Every storm widened those patches, and made certain that worse damage would ensue.

The lesson of land misuse thus shockingly made clear was highlighted just a little more than a mile to the south of the canyon that

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had produced the most destructive mud flow of all. Here there was another canyon, the seventh in the Farmington-Centerville area, and it had never had a flood of any kind. Every cloudburst that struck the six canyons immediately north of it also struck this one, but its creek had never overflowed. At the mouth of this stream is the village of Centerville, whose 600 inhabitants had interpreted the warning signs correctly and had acted on them. Using town funds, they had bought or leased the whole watershed above. Where the worn spots that mean overgrazing were beginning to show, they had ruled all livestock off till the grass and shrubs came back. Throughout the rest of the watershed, they had limited the cattle and sheep allowed to graze there to the numbers the experts decided were safe. And that was all. The sickening land had rapidly healed itself, grass grew plentifully, the soil stayed in place, the cloudbursts did no damage. Centerville Creek ran clear; the town was secure from the desert threat, while its neighbors suffered.

Centerville had solved the problem before the rest of Davis County understood what the problem was. It had protected itself by its own efforts and at comparatively little cost. But to save the rest of Davis County was now an undertaking altogether beyond the power of local communities: it required help from both the state and the federal governments. Both cooperated, and the great project was entrusted to the United States Forest Service.

Two things were necessary. First, the causes that had produced the destruction of vegetation and the erosion of the land—fire and overgrazing—must be removed. So, small areas that were in the most critical condition were leased, and all grazing on them was prohibited. A special Act of Congress authorized the Forest Service to use part of the fees received for grazing in the nearest National Forest to buy land in the mountains above Davis County. Year by year, it has done so, acquiring tracts in the order of worst condition, till by now almost all the mountain area of Davis County has been added to the Wasatch National Forest. This area is covered by the Forest Service's expert and scientific system of fire protection, and grazing on them has been prohibited until the areas that were the sources of floods are entirely restored.

There remained the direct attack on the exhausted lands. In the

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spring of 1934, under the direction of the Forest Service, 200 boys in the Civilian Conservation Corps went to work on the Wasatch slopes. They worked there in force that year and the next, and some of them were kept at work there until 1940, when CCC funds ran out. They did the most spectacular job of restoring damaged land that the West has ever seen.

On all the bare spots where the floods had originated, and on all other slopes where erosion had begun, they built series of contour trenches. The function of these terrace-like trenches was to break up the erosion gullies that had formed, and to catch the runoff from denuded slopes and hold it back so that it could sink into the ground. At short intervals down the length of each trench a lower, cross-dam of earth was built, to make sure that only small portions could be destroyed at any one time. The CCC constructed as many of them as it could with tractor-driven bulldozers. On steep slopes and rocky outcrops it used horses and plows, and in a few almost vertical places it was necessary to dig the trenches by hand.

Terracing on the contour is an ancient way of protecting farmland from soil erosion, but never before had it been used as a measure of flood prevention on high Western mountainsides. It made a spectacular, inspiring, almost incredible sight. Wherever the slopes had been denuded, the trenches climbed them in twenty-five foot steps, straight up, sometimes all the way to the ridge, which might be 2,000 feet or more. The Forest Service planted them and the spaces between them with a mixture of grasses—some natives of the region, and some aliens, chosen because they spread rapidly or had unusually big root-systems to hold soil in place. Also, it planted tree seedlings.

The Forest Service calculated in 1934 that fifteen years would suffice to remove the threat of disastrous flood. (Some relief would begin at once; full restoration would take many years.) A spectacular, triumphant vindication of the treatment came on August 19, 1945, when the Davis County project was still four years short of completion. On that day the Forest Service methods of healing sick land were proved sound in the eyes of anyone who might care to look—and the entire West learned a lesson that will serve it from now on.

That day the most violent summer cloudburst ever recorded in Utah struck the west front of the Wasatch. Every creek in the re-

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stored watersheds of Davis County held to its banks; there were no floods; no damage was done in the areas that had been repeatedly damaged in 1930. But at Salt Lake City, just outside Davis County to the south, a small creek whose watershed had been impaired by fire and overgrazing came roaring out of its banks and caused $350,000 worth of damage in fifteen minutes. And at Ogden, just outside Davis County to the north, another overgrazed watershed poured a destructive mud flow to within two miles of the center of town.

That dramatic contrast produced action in Utah. Long-imperiled watersheds in the Wasatch are now receiving treatment and regulation that will save them. (Less drastic regulation and less expensive treatment than Davis County had to have, for the damage had not proceeded so far.) Public knowledge of the destructive forces at work has spread so widely that Utah, the Western state which has traveled farthest down the road back to the desert, is certainly going to save itself from the desert threat.

Meanwhile, Davis County has already been saved. True, the farmland that was actually destroyed will never be farmland again during the geological epoch in which we live, but there will be no more mud flows and no more floods. The creeks are secure. The farms have got back their fertility—and their monetary value. Production has been restored, the valley flourishes, many people have moved in. With the nonchalance of Westerners hardened to risk, some of them have built new houses directly below the mouths of canyons that nineteen years ago poured out death and destruction in ten-foot walls of mud.

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Turner and the Frontier Myth

Richard Hofstadter

AMERICAN historical writing in the past century has produced two major theories or models of understanding, the economic interpretation of politics associated with Charles A. Beard, and the frontier interpretation of American development identified with Frederick Jackson Turner. Both views have had a pervasive influence upon American thinking, but Beard himself felt that Turner's original essay on the frontier had "a more profound influence on thought about American history than any other essay or volume ever written on the subject." It is the frontier thesis that has embodied the predominant American view of the American past.

Turner wrote his memorable essay, "The Significance of the Frontier in American History," during that period of growing tension between the Eastern and Western United States which culminated in the Bryan campaign of 1896. An expression of rising Western self-consciousness, Turner's thesis was meant to challenge the dominant academic school of Eastern historians then led by his former teacher, Herbert Baxter Adams. The members of this school concerned themselves chiefly with the development of American political institutions. Their controlling assumption was that American democracy and local self-government had come, by way of England, from remote Anglo-Saxon political institutions like the Witanagemot, which could be traced back to the forests of Germany. Under the sway of Darwinian evolutionism, they followed the genetic method with the passion of zealots and doctrinaires; they attributed to political institutions a kind of self-contained and self-determining cycle of growth comparable to that of a living organism.

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Like the Easterners, Turner was an evolutionist concerned primarily with political forms. But in contrast to the Adams school, with its reliance upon racial heredity and self-determined growth, Turner looked for the influence of environment. In his opinion, the Adams school was paying far too much attention to the European "germs" of American institutions, and far too little to the American soil in which these "germs" had grown. It was not the self-unfolding of imported institutions, but rather the events that took place on native grounds, that decided the course of American development. The unique and distinguishing elements of American history could be found on the American scene in the shape of the frontier and free land. "The existence of an area of free land, its continuous recession, and the advance of American settlement westward explain American development."

American evolution, Turner believed, had been a repeated return to primitive conditions on a continually receding frontier line, a constant repetition of development from simple conditions to a complex society. From this perennial rebirth and fluidity of American life, and from its continual re-exposure to the simplicity of primitive society, had come the forces dominant in the American character. And as the frontier advanced, society moved steadily away from European influences, grew steadily on distinctive American lines. To study this advance and the men who had been fashioned by it was "to study the really American part of our history."

Of all the effects of the frontier, the most important was that it promoted democracy and individualism. So long as free land existed, there was always opportunity for a man to acquire a competency, and economic power secured political power. Each succeeding frontier furnished "a new field of opportunity, a gate of escape from the bondage of the past." The lack of binding tradition and organized restraints promoted a distinctively American passion for individual freedom, antipathy to direct control from outside, aggressive self-interest, and intolerance of education and administrative experience. But by the year 1890, this process had come to an end; the frontier, the hither edge of unsettled land, no longer existed, and with its passing the first epoch of American history had closed.

Turner's essay created no sensation when it was first read before

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the American Historical Association in 1893, but his idea steadily gained ground. Young American historians, discontented with the poverty of ideas in previous historical writing, and repelled by the Adams school with its patent irrelevance to the development of the American hinterland, readily gravitated toward Turner's views. The man, moreover, was a charming and magnetic teacher; his seminars, which produced an astonishing amount of first-rate monographic research, were an influence in themselves. Students who came to study with him at Wisconsin and Harvard found a modest and inspiring scholar who could teach them to exploit untapped resources, utilize maps and figures, and write surprisingly significant regional studies. But they brought the frontier idea to their researches, not as a theory to be tested, but as an all-sufficient assumption which could be used to explain what they had found. With repetition, the frontier thesis, vague enough in the master's own formulations, became less a working hypothesis than an incantation.

But the strength of Turner's thesis, which had an influence extending far beyond the historical profession, rested upon the appeal of the frontier to the American imagination. Some of its initial impetus no doubt came from the Western agrarian revolt of the nineties; before long, however, it lost its vague Populist edge and became identified with a complacent nationalist romanticism, as congenial to the Eastern mind as to the Western. The notion of an aggressive pioneering national spirit nurtured by repeated exposure to primitive conditions became a means to national self-glorification. Appealing to the common desire to root native history in native soil, the Turner thesis sanctioned the tendency to shrink from comparative reference to the experience of other peoples. It also satisfied the desire, common in the age of Progressivism and muckraking, to have a "materialistic" interpretation of history that did not risk the ideological pitfalls of the class struggle idea. Happily it was vague enough to be used in different, often opposite ways. Conservatives could point to the value of the hardihood and rugged individualism allegedly derived from the frontier heritage. Those who wanted to justify a "progressive" departure could answer that the frontier period, after all, *was* over. As late as 1932, in his memorable Commonwealth Club address, Franklin D. Roosevelt utilized

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the Turnerian inheritance as the historical rationale of the New Deal: "Our last frontier has long since been reached, and there is practically no more free land. . . . There is no safety valve in the form of a Western prairie to which those thrown out of work by the Eastern machines can go for a new start."

Again, the frontier myth has been accepted even by critics of American culture who have repudiated its provincial nationalism and isolationism, and espoused antithetical values. During the 1920's, when the dominant mood of American intellectuals was one of estrangement from their country, the frontier was assigned a prominent place—along with puritanism, pragmatism and the commercial spirit—among the forces that had corrupted American culture. In Van Wyck Brooks's biography of Mark Twain, for example, the frontier became an almost demonic force that had barbarized, cramped and distorted Twain's genius.

The Great Depression of the thirties brought a revaluation of the frontier myth. Obviously, the depression was world-wide, and the central problems confronting the United States were those of the world at large. The feeling that the Republic was not what it used to be led to the suspicion that it never had been. Re-examination of old clichés was encouraged by the new popularity of Marxism, with its emphasis upon classes rather than sections or areas. It was also encouraged by a rising interest in the history of ideas: no one who focused attention upon ideas and their influence in American history could hold very long to the notion that the main stream of American ideas and habits of behavior moved from West to East. During the last fifteen years, more and more historians have become circumspect about the frontier process, and critical writing on the Turner thesis has become a prominent feature of professional periodicals. The Turner thesis is increasingly viewed as an inadequate concept with which to "explain" American development, and by some even as a positive hindrance to sound inquiry into the American past.*

* The present essay is a synthesis of some of the more important arguments and findings of Turner's critics. The critics themselves are too numerous to be acknowledged specifically and in detail, but I have drawn upon notable contributions made by Thomas Perkins Abernethy, Charles A. Beard, Clarence H. Danhof, Sol Davison, Paul Wallace Gates, Carter Goodrich, Louis Hacker, Carleton J. H. Hayes, Murray Kane, George W. Pierson, Arthur M. Schlesinger, Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., Fred A. Shannon, Richard Shryock and Benjamin F. Wright.

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The initial plausibility of the Turner thesis lies in the patent fact that no nation could spend more than a century developing an immense continental empire without being deeply affected by it. Few critics question the great importance of the inland empire, or that Turner originally performed a service for historical writing by directing attention to it. Many accept Turner's emphasis on the frontier as one of several valid but limited perspectives on American history. But it has been forcefully denied that the frontier deserves any special pre-eminence among several major factors in "explaining" American development. The question has also been raised (and frequently answered in the negative) whether Turner analyzed the frontier process itself clearly or correctly.

It became plain, as new thought and research was brought to bear upon the problem, that the frontier theory, as an analytic device, was a blunt instrument. The terms with which the Turnerians dealt—the frontier, the West, individualism, the American character—were vague at the outset, and as the Turnerian exposition developed, they did not receive increasingly sharp definition. Precisely because Turner defined the frontier so loosely ("the term," he said, "is an elastic one"), he could claim so much for it. At times he referred to the frontier literally as the edge of the settled territory having a population density of two to the square mile. But frequently he identified "the frontier" and "the West," so that areas actually long settled could be referred to as frontier. At times he spoke of both the "frontier" and the "West" not as places or areas, but as a social process: "The West, at bottom, is a form of society rather than an area." When this definition is followed to its logical conclusion, the development of American society is "explained" by "a form of society"—certainly a barren tautology. Again, at times Turner assimilated such natural resources as coal, oil, timber, to the idea of "the West"; in this way the truism that natural wealth has an important bearing upon a nation's development and characteristics was subtly absorbed into the mystique of the frontier and took on the guise of a major insight.

However, the central weakness of Turner's thesis was in its intellectual isolationism. Having committed himself to an initial overemphasis on the uniqueness of the historical development of the

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United States, Turner compounded the error by overemphasizing the frontier as a factor in this development. The obsession with uniqueness, the subtly demagogic stress on "the truly American part of our history," diverted the attention of historical scholarship from the possibilities of comparative social history; it offered no opportunity to explain why so many features of American development—for example, the rise of democracy in the nineteenth century—were parallel to changes in countries that did not have a contiguous frontier. Historians were encouraged to omit a host of basic influences common to both American and Western European development—the influence of Protestantism and the Protestant ethic, the inheritance from English republicanism, the growth of industrialism and urbanism. More than this, factors outside the frontier process that contributed to the singularity of American history were skipped over: the peculiar American federal structure, the slave system and the Southern caste complex, immigration and ethnic heterogeneity, the unusually capitalistic and speculative character of American agriculture, the American inheritance of *laissez faire*. The interpretation seems particularly weak for the corporate-industrial phase of American history that followed the Civil War. Indeed, if the historian's range of vision had to be limited to one explanatory idea, as it fortunately does not, one could easily argue that the business corporation was the dominant dynamic factor in American development during this period.

As a form of geographical determinism, the frontier interpretation is vulnerable on still another ground. If the frontier alone was a self-sufficient source of democracy and individualism, whatever the institutions and ideas the frontiersmen brought with them, frontiers elsewhere ought to have had a similar effect. The early frontier of seignorial French Canada, the South American frontier, and the Siberian frontier should have fostered democracy and individualism. The frontier should have forged the same kind of democracy when planters came to Mississippi as when yeomen farmers came to Illinois. Turner's dictum, "American democracy came out of the American forest," proved to be a questionable improvement upon the notion of his predecessors that it came out of the German forest. Plainly the whole complex of institutions, habits

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and ideas that men brought to the frontier was left out of his formula, and it was these things, not bare geography, that had been decisive. Turner's analysis, as George Warren Pierson aptly put it, hung too much on real estate, not enough on a state of mind.

If American democracy originated on the frontier or in the West, it ought to be possible to trace successive waves of democratic sentiment and practice from West to East. But when the periods of democratic advance are examined, no such process can be found. After almost two centuries of life under frontier conditions in colonial America, democracy had made little headway; society was still highly stratified and the suffrage was restricted. The American Revolution gave a considerable impetus to democratic developments, but it is not easy to assign any priority in the Revolution to the Western or frontier population. Eastern merchants took a notable part in the pre-Revolutionary agitation—as did urban mobs and Eastern farmers, who also contributed much to the fighting. The ideas that were used to justify the Revolution and later adapted to the democratic cause were not generated in the wilds around Kaskaskia, but derived from the English republicanism of the seventeenth century—notably, of course, from Locke.

Both great periods of the upsurge of democracy in nineteenth-century America, the Jeffersonian and the Jacksonian, are far more intelligible in terms of social classes than of the East or the West, if only because both had so much strength in Eastern and urban areas. Jeffersonianism, which was strong among seaboard slaveholders and in many of the towns, is somewhat more comprehensible as a movement of agrarians against capitalists, than as a movement of the frontier against the East. The age of Jackson has been held up more than any other as an example of the democratic spirit of the frontier in action. Yet Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr.'s recent study of that era does not employ the frontier thesis, and it is highly successful in asserting the crucial role of Eastern Jacksonians. With the exception of a few scattered local areas, many of which were in the West, Jackson swept the country when he was elected in 1828, and Jacksonian democracy can best be understood as a nationwide movement, supported by parts of the planting, farming, laboring and entrepreneurial classes.

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It may be conceded to the Turnerians that the West occasionally gave democratic ideas an especially favorable area for operation—but it should be conceded in return that these ideas were generated in the Eastern United States and in Western civilization as a whole. By and large, Western settlers appear to have been more imitative than original in their political institutions. The case for the West as a special source of individualism is similarly mixed. It is possible to point to a fairly strong stream of Western demands for governmental interference of one kind or another from the days of internal improvements to the age of railroad regulation, parity and price supports.

One of the most criticized aspects of Turner's conception of American history, the so-called safety-valve thesis, maintains that the availability of free land as a refuge for the oppressed and discontented has alleviated American social conflicts, minimized industrial strife, and contributed to the backwardness of the American labor movement. As Turner expressed it, the American worker was never compelled to accept inferior wages because he could "with a slight effort" reach free country and set up in farming. "Whenever social conditions tended to crystallize in the East, whenever capital tended to impede the freedom of the mass, there was this gate of escape to the free conditions of the frontier," where "free lands promoted individualism, economic equality, freedom to rise, democracy."

The expression "free land" is itself misleading. Land was relatively cheap in the United States during the nineteenth century, but the difference between free land and cheap land was crucial. Up to 1820 the basic price of land was $2.00 an acre, and for years afterward it was $1.25. Slight as it may seem, this represented a large sum to the Eastern worker, whose wage was generally about $1.00 a day. Economic historians have estimated that during the 1850's, $1,000 represented a fairly typical cost for setting up a farm on virgin prairie land, or buying an established one; and the cost of transporting a worker's family from, say, Massachusetts or New York to Illinois or Iowa was a serious additional burden. Farming, moreover, is no enterprise for an amateur, nor one at which he has a good chance of success. The value of "free land" in alleviating distress has been

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challenged by several writers who have pointed out that periods of depression were the very periods when it was most difficult for the Eastern worker to move. Scattered instances of working-class migration to the West can be pointed to, but detailed studies of the origins of migrants have failed to substantiate the Turner thesis.

The Homestead Act of 1862, which was designed to give family-size farms (up to 160 acres) to bona fide settlers, does not seem to have changed the picture drastically. It suggests an era of great bounty, which turns out upon examination to be illusory. By 1890, after a generation of hectic national growth, only about 372,000 farms had been entered and kept under the Homestead Act. In the meantime, about 180,000,000 acres had been given by state and federal governments to the railroad companies, who held some of it and disposed of much at a considerable markup. Much of the best land was also withheld for sale by the government—and it usually went at prices well above the minimum of $2.50 an acre. Out of every six or seven acres that the government had given up by 1900, only one had gone to homesteaders. Unfortunately, the showing of the homesteaders was poorer than this figure indicates, for not all of them were legitimate. The administration of the Homestead Act was so hopelessly bad that scores upon scores of speculators, using dummies to masquerade their entries, secured parcels of land often running into tens of thousands of acres, and these lands passed into the hands of farmers only after the speculators had taken their cut. As Roy M. Robbins remarks in his study of *Our Landed Heritage*, the period was one in which "the corporate and capitalistic forces had gained complete ascendancy over the settler as the pioneering agent." By 1900, 35.3 per cent of the farms in this nation of "free land" were operated by tenants.

In spite of these criticisms, something has been salvaged from the safety-valve thesis. Although the West was not filled up by workers moving in time of depression, the evidence indicates that it was filled up by farmers moving in times of prosperity. In this way the presence of available land is generally conceded to have played an important part in relieving *rural* discontent—the dominant form of discontent in nineteenth-century America. And it presumably had a roundabout effect on the urban situation. In Europe the city was

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the characteristic haven of the surplus farm population. Insofar as the comparable surplus population of the United States took another choice, migration further West, instead of swelling the ranks of the urban working class, there may have been an indirect operation of the safety valve. Its magnitude and importance are uncertain.

But the safety valve principle also operated in reverse, and it is a signal weakness of the Turner version that it concentrates attention on much the less significant of two population movements. The dominant tide of migration from 1860 to 1900 was not from East to West, but from the farm to the city. In forty years the farm population grew by about nine million, while the non-farm population grew by almost thirty-six million. It was the cities that received not only the bulk of the immigration from abroad, but also the bulk of the surplus farm population. This flow of the farm surplus to the cities may have been intermittent, broken and partially reversed during depression periods, but its net size is undeniable. Fred A. Shannon has estimated that "at least twenty farmers moved to town for each industrial laborer who moved to the land, and ten sons of farmers went to the city for each one who became the owner of a new farm anywhere in the nation. It is possible that the acuteness of the agrarian unrest of the 1890's can be traced in some part to the fact that the pace of city growth had slackened off, and that this safety valve for the farmers was beginning to fail. At any rate, to follow the Turnerian emphasis upon "free land" as a primary outlet, and to ignore the migration to the cities, is to perpetrate a major distortion of American history.

Finally, Turner acknowledged but failed to see the full importance for his thesis of the fact that the United States not only had a frontier but was a frontier—a major outlet for the countries of Western Europe during the nineteenth century. From 1820 to 1929, the total European emigration to the United States was more than 37, 500,000—a number only a million short of the entire population of the United States in 1870. In one decade alone, 1901-1910, 8,795,000 people came from Europe. If Europe shared to such a major extent in this safety-valve economy, its uniqueness for American development must be considerably modified. The mingling of peoples that took place in the United States must be placed

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alongside the presence of "free land" in explaining American development; the closure of the American gates after the First World War becomes an historical event of broader significance than the disappearance of the frontier line in 1890. And the facts of immigration probably provide a better key to the character of the American labor movement than any speculation about the effects of "free land" upon workers who could not reach it.

It should be added, in justice to Turner, that his historical writing was better than his frontier thesis, and not least because he regularly made use in practice of historical factors which were not accounted for in his theory. Although he often stated his ideas with the vigor of a propagandist, his was not a doctrinaire mind, and he was willing, as time went on, to add new concepts to his analysis. In 1925 he went so far as to admit the need of "an urban reinterpretation of our history." "I hope," he frequently said, "to propagate inquiry, not to produce disciples." In fact he did both, but he propagated less inquiry among his disciples than among his critics.

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Prologue to Negeb

Milton Gelman

Signal torches
high on distant, blackened hills
send their winking messages.

On the plains below
Egyptian soldiers watch
them spin in flaming cartwheels,
summoning the ages to remember.

They breathe the cold night air,
shudder in the naked starlight,
feel the chilly touch
of history whispering by
carried on the restive wind.

They know too well
that in the flow
of timeless time
the sounds are much the same.

(Muffled orders in the distance
carry to them words the ages
froze in scrolls;
metallic slide of bayoneted guns
rubbing modern helmets
is but echoed memory
of scraping sword on shield.)

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Now these homesick men from Egypt
see how modern
the ancient struggle is,
how strength against invaders
gives the very rocks defiance.

They know that in the hidden hills
there is no rank. Men stand side by side
on land familiar to their feet
while they, uneasy in
this stranger's house
(for masters far away)
await the morning death
alone.

They shudder in the naked starlight,
feel the chilly touch
of history as it
whispers by
while torches warn them. . . .

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Time-frightened Playwrights

George R. Kernodle

THE MAN of today cannot rejoice in his day. He cannot cast off a recurring nightmare of time. He goes to the theater to forget the past, but the latest playwrights are even more obsessed by time than he. *A Streetcar Named Desire*, *The Madwoman of Chaillot*, and *Death of a Salesman* all show him a vision of the twentieth century heading straight for destruction, insanity and suicide. The more he consumes the endless newspapers, "Time" magazines, radio newcasts, private dope sheets, books and columns of inside stories, in an ever-losing race to keep up with the minute, the more he finds himself involved in time. Then he rushes out to buy Spengler, or Toynbee, or anyone who promises to tell him what time and history mean.

Time has ceased to be a mere setting for human history; it is an active force, a force of evil. It seems to be going faster and faster, always bearing man nearer some frightful finish. Caught in the vortex, he looks back with anguished nostalgia to some blissful age of confidence and leisure—before the atom, before the war, before the depression, before the twentieth century. Fifty years ago he wanted to cut himself free from all bonds of the past and walk boldly into the modern age. But now he no longer walks. He is being taken on a machine ride faster and faster. Somehow he must get a firmer footing in time.

Even the psychological plays like *Dear Brutus*, *The Star Wagon*, and *Lady in the Dark*, which juggle with time in order to explore individual personality problems, imply a century where it is all too

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easy to take the wrong turn. The more important plays of time diagnose the century itself, finding now complete destruction and now a little hope, and sometimes suggesting a whole new view of history. The most terrifying plays show man in the twentieth century caught in a speeding whirl of time. The early plays of destruction—*Cavalcade*, *Merrily We Roll Along*, and *Time and the Conways*—appeared in the depression years. But *A Streetcar Named Desire* and *Death of a Salesman* find audiences today with an even more urgent sense that time is running out. The second vision, which has developed mainly since the war, implies some hope in the future. It does not deny the defeat and destruction of the past, but it can love and forgive because now it is sure of its moral condemnation of that past. *The Searching Wind*, *Edward My Son*, and *Death of a Salesman* examine the relations of fathers and sons in the course of the years in search of an understanding of how the century went wrong and how the future may be different from the past. The few really hopeful time plays are those like *Our Town*, *Thunder Rock*, and *The Skin of Our Teeth*, which show modern man against a long view of history. The implication is clear—that those who look only at the twentieth century fall victim to the myth of time running out. Surely the long view must eventually prevail, if man can rebuild his contact with the past. But these hopeful plays have not made the strongest impression. In a world that sees its future blocked by wars and its past alienated by modern science, machines, atomic bombs and relentless speed, the most compelling vision of time is one of destruction.

Tennessee Williams' *A Streetcar Named Desire* made its impact not because it said something new, but because it was the finest expression of this first vision—the trauma of time, the destructive effect of the twentieth century. Blanche DuBois is shown during her last frantic flight before the terror catches up with her. In many ways she is typical of all the myths of time-running-out. She is an alien, a fugitive. Cut off from the old world of order and security, she is adrift in a new urban world where time is only the speeding moment. The old plantation world is gone—all the people dead who used to run it, and the house turned over to creditors. The name of the plantation is significant—Belle Rêve, or beautiful dream.

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The urban world offers her one way to escape from time. Her sister Stella has married a strong, almost illiterate ape-man and lives in a two-room flat in the old French quarter of New Orleans, well adjusted to life on an animal level. But Blanche is too sensitive for such an adjustment. She builds up lies and illusions to hide the scars and terrors of the past. She tries bravely to master the moment, but it is already too late. Memories of the past waltz through her mind. The noise of the city trains dins in her ears. Her ape-like brother-in-law strips away her last pretense. Time has run out; the fugitive is caught. She plunges into the abyss of insanity.

Giraudoux' *The Madwoman of Chaillot* is a much more cheerful vision of time and insanity. Like *Harvey*, it presents insanity as infinitely preferable to a cold rationality that destroys all human values. When the Mad Woman discovers that the calculating, inhuman organizers, who seem to have come into the twentieth century from another planet, are about to take over the world, and that even the violets are withering and the pigeons are walking, unable to pay tribute for the air, she organizes a revolt. She discovers that the big-time operators can be destroyed by their own greed; and, like the Pied Piper of Hamelin, she lures them all into the abyss. As soon as she has rid the world of its disease of modernity, she urges the young couple together before it is too late. It is already too late for her—she and her sweetheart had failed in loyalty and love early in the century. Now she is an eccentric, foolish old woman. Giraudoux finds it more cheerful to picture the insane destroying the ape-man, but he is just as time-frightened as Tennessee Williams.

Although *Death of a Salesman* has implications beyond the simple myth of decay and destruction, its central character, like Blanche DuBois, has failed to cope with the changing age. Both the salesman and the age are to blame. He has built his own character and his human relationships on a series of lies and illusions which carry him and his world to destruction. But the age has changed too. The same cold impersonality of big business which enrages the Mad Women of Chaillot baffles and defeats the old salesman. The play reinforces all the terror the audience finds in this age, and yet it also belongs with *Edward My Son* and those plays which indicate a bridge to the future in a better understanding of the past.

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The earlier visions of the terrors of time had less sense of an urgent crisis than these postwar plays, but they gave more analysis of year-by-year decay and destruction. The myth of the twentieth century as an arid desert had already been developed in T. S. Eliot's poem *The Waste Land* in the 1920's. It found its wide theater audience first in Noel Coward's *Cavalcade* in 1931. A leader in the up-to-the-minute society of the 1920's, Coward was one of the first to fall victim to the vision of time as terror. He wrote a cavalcade of English history since 1900, beginning with a picture of a glorious past that caught the nostalgic feelings of the English Conservative victory in 1931 and became very popular on both sides of the Atlantic. Through many scenes the play shows the ironic destruction caused by time. It opens at midnight with a toast to the twentieth century in a family that is secure and only mildly disturbed by the Boer War. The mother wishes for her boys, "Oh, please God, Peace and Happiness for them, always."

But time and events are against them. One is seen on a honeymoon voyage leaning with his bride against the rail of the ship, but when they move away, they reveal the name on the life-saver—"Titanic." The other son is killed in the war in France. Those who survive are marred by time. "Time changes many things. . . . Something seems to have gone out of all of us, and I'm not sure I like what's left."

The fault lies not only in the pursuit of success, night-club life, and irregularity of living, but in a fundamental loss of loyalty. The servants who are no longer loyal to the master and mistress are more than expressions of a snobbish nostalgia for a lost aristocracy; they are symbols of a general breakdown. Bridges is killed just after his drunken defiance of his former mistress. His daughter Fanny, thought a very successful night club singer, sings the "Twentieth Century Blues," with its discordant expression of "chaos and confusion—nothing to win or lose." The old couple, symbols of the old pride and loyalty, lift their glasses and drink to the hope that their country "will find dignity and greatness and peace again." Only in memories of the past could the Coward of 1931 find any cheer in the twentieth century.

An even more devastating analysis of this century was presented

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in 1935 by Kaufman and Hart in *Merrily We Roll Along*. It begins at the end of the story and goes backward for two decades, not as a stunt, and not merely for irony, but because time is the villain of the piece. The central figure, a playwright, finds at forty that he is a great success with the public and his fashionable friends, but a complete failure to himself. "You think these plays mean anything to me?" he asks. "I do them because I can't do anything else—I don't dare stop and take a look at myself." The girl who had loved him is a drunken derelict. His one honest friend has deserted him. His actress wife, whom he had used on his climb, angry that a younger woman is taking her place, throws iodine in her rival's eyes, denounces her husband, and destroys his success. The rest of the play traces the playwright back through the twentieth century step by step—to the beginning of his career in 1916, when as valedictorian of his college class he proclaims his ideal of integrity: "To thine own self be true, and it must follow, as the night the day, thou canst not then be false to any man." The ironic sequence of one betrayal after the other is a terrible indictment of the lack of integrity and the pursuit of quick success in this century.

In Priestley's popular *Time and the Conways* (1937) the terror is even stronger. Time has become a positive, personified force. The playwright does not blame any one thing, or suggest that the twentieth century is worse than any other. He blames time itself. The first act shows a family in 1919, looking forward with great hope. In the second act, twenty years later, they have not only grown older but nasty and cheap. One of the characters, as appalled as the audience, remarks, "Better to die, like Carol, before you find it out, before Time gets to work on you. There's a great devil in the universe, and we call it Time." But the author smugly has one character tell the others to be cheerful, that they just happen to be looking out an unpleasant peephole on time; that it is only because they think time is ticking their lives away that they snatch at things and destroy one another.

It might have been predicted that a century that started by cutting off all ties with the past would soon find itself shipwrecked in the present. Man not only moved away from families, churches, clubs and small communities; he also attacked all the traditional concepts.

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He wanted to be up to the minute; journalism replaced history. Where a nineteenth century man read and thought about the antiquity of his religion and the history of his country, his descendant in the twentieth century reads only contemporaries and thinks only about the future. Clearly he no longer has a sense of an organic relation to the past, and now he is lost without it. But most excursions into the past, instead of helping, only increase a feverish discontent with the present. Nostalgic reminiscences of family life fifty years ago, like *Life with Father* and *The Late George Apley*, while they draw on stock responses to the supposed stupidity of the Victorians, leave a stronger sense of present shortcomings.

Nor have historians helped. If they follow the journalistic approach and treat the past in terms of values and interests of the present, they deny history. There is a certain novel excitement in this. A Freudian or Marxist interpretation of the past is like a modern-dress *Hamlet* or an infra-red photograph of the Mona Lisa; it can throw into relief certain unnoticed shapes of the past. But it cannot show the vision men of the past had of themselves and their place in history. On the other hand, if the historians take the "scientific" approach and view a single segment of the past "objectively," they just as definitely deny history. If they study history as something completely outside themselves, they must perforce think of themselves as completely outside history.

The few attempts to interpret history have gained an enormous public response. Hundreds of hopeful people bought Spengler, and thousands are buying Toynbee. But very few are reading beyond the first glance. Even this readers-digest version of history is too complex. It considers too many fragments of separate cultures to give an organic sense of present man in relation to his own past. The real historical interpretation, which cuts through scientific fragments and philosophical complexities and reaches all literate men with a vision of modern man in time is still to be written. Perhaps it cannot be written as long as the pragmatists teach men to ignore history, the "scientists" teach men to isolate and fossilize the fragments of history, and the mystics teach that history is made by manifest destiny, blind economic forces, mechanical preponderance of power—something outside of man himself. Perhaps it

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cannot be written until man again sees himself as creating history out of his vision of the past and his will for the future.

Perhaps it has always been left to the dramatist rather than the historian to give a vision of time. While Herodotus wrote of the changes in the Greece of his lifetime, Aeschylus in his plays took the long view, tracing the hatred of tyranny back to the primeval Titan, Prometheus, and the emergence of social order back to the first jury trial that replaced the vengeance of Orestes. The trilogy form of Greek drama, with a third play to reconcile the conflicts in the first two, served well to present an historical pattern of the achievement of understanding and hope out of the conflicts of the past. It was Shakespeare, and no historian, who provided the Renaissance vision of Roman leaders and the pageant of English kings. From the theater Shakespeare's audience gained a strong sense of their place in history. The episodic form of the Elizabethan play, with its alternation of kings and commons, focused the interests of all classes in a vision of public welfare under a responsible ruler—a vision that has not yet faded completely. The question is whether the twentieth century can supply a vision equally clear and inspiring.

Not all playwrights have accepted the myth of time running out. Some find a little hope, if the twentieth century can come to understand its own history—understand how its dilemmas came about. In the midst of the depression, S. N. Behrman wrote *End of Summer* to show the attitude of three generations toward money. The granddaughter repudiates the climber who tries grandfather's method of getting on, but she and her young man face the future more sure of themselves because of an understanding of the past.

In the midst of the war, Lillian Hellman wrote *The Searching Wind* to examine the responsibility of Americans for Mussolini, Hitler and Munich. Her war-scarred young man cannot accept the cynical journalistic objectivity of his grandfather: he must take a place in history. He disapproves of his parents and demands that they change, but he cannot discard them or break with the past as he would have done earlier in the century.

At the end of the war, Robert Morley and Noel Langley wrote *Edward My Son* to trace both the excellent intentions and the devas-

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tating effects of a prewar Englishman who, without ethics or mercy, grasped everything to indulge his son. At the end, the postwar grandson is taken completely out of the hands of the old man, but the play shows a sympathetic understanding of the past. In a similar way *Death of a Salesman* is more than a picture of destruction in the twentieth century. Even more relentlessly than in *Edward My Son*, the dishonesty and blindness of the father is condemned. But out of a fuller understanding and love for the father comes a glimpse of hope for the future: one son at last understands himself. These are not cheerful plays, but they do suggest that the answer lies in recognizing responsibility for the past and not in flight or separation from time.

What of those plays which manage to point with cheer to the future by suggesting a vision of man in relation to the whole stream of time? They are pitifully few, and their vision may seem very tentative and incomplete. But they have made a beginning, and they have brought new faith at critical moments. *Our Town* came in 1938, halfway between the great depression and the great war, to give a reassuring picture of man. *Thunder Rock*, although it attracted no following when it was shown in New York in 1939, was the London sensation of 1940-41, the year of the great blitz, when the English found courage to hold out. The third play, *Skin of Our Teeth*, came in 1942, when the Germans were moving eastward to the Volga and the Japanese eastward over the South Pacific.

The characters in *Our Town* live secure in the present moment because they have a past and a future. Wilder sets them against the time of the village cemetery, which started in the seventeenth century; against the rocks and fossils of the Appalachian Mountains, one of the oldest mountains in the world; against the Indian tribes, the English settlers, and the later immigrants from Central Europe; against Babylon and Greece; against the time a thousand years hence when a cornerstone might be opened to show the daily life of the twentieth century; and finally against the stars and planets and skies. Only against a whole life can the significance of its events—school, courtship, marriage, death—be realized. Only by the juxtaposition of two points in time can the significance of any one moment be shown. Only when Emily looks back after death to one of the least important days of her girlhood, experiencing it and yet looking at it

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from the future, does she realize the divine meaning of daily living. Proust had placed side by side the remembered and the present moment, but his purpose was only to demonstrate the subjective, memorial quality of experience. Wilder's vision is more than an aesthetic device; it is a myth of the meaning of man's life in history, both subjective and public.

Robert Ardrey's *Thunder Rock* solves a problem in the present by showing a bewildered young man that he can make a dynamic use of the past. He has shut himself up in a lighthouse on Lake Superior to forget the present and explore the problems of the passengers of a lake boat lost in the nineteenth century. Those lost wraiths show him that the past looks distorted until he sees himself more clearly in relation to his own day. There can be no vision of man in time which isolates either past or present.

The most vivid myth of the age, and in some ways the wisest, is Wilder's *Skin of Our Teeth*. Its wisdom appears if we compare it with the petty visions that compete for attention on the air, in print, in gossip, even in the council room. The Communists see nothing good before Marx, the semanticists nothing good before Korzybski, the actors nothing good before Stanislavski, while the neo-Thomists see nothing good in philosophy after the thirteenth century.

But Wilder's vision is at once more complex and more simple. It shows history as one continuous process, with no one all-important event, but a series of numberless all-important events. Hence there is no pre-scientific age, but all ages, from the invention of the wheel to the invention of a way of peace in the twentieth century, are in one continuous series marked by the gradual creation of science. Wilder gains courage to face a present disaster by telescoping all disasters from the Ice Age and Noah's Flood to modern wars. He brings together the attempts to find the meaning of life from the Bible and Plato to Spinoza, and all attempts to solve problems by violence from Cain to modern wars. Hence the dinosaur and the mammoth are household pets in a twentieth century house, and Mr. Antrobus sends word by telegraph that he is inventing the multiplication table and the alphabet. As the ice age moves into New Jersey, the hungry foreign refugees turn out to be Judge Moses, who makes laws, Homer, who makes poems, and the three

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Muse sisters, who sing in moments of despair. The deluge comes in the midst of a convention of Mammals at Atlantic City, and the end of the war is the end of any disaster, with a weary search for strength and hope to start rebuilding. The ending, with its psychological probing of the nature of hatred and enmity and the difficulty of living together in peace, is just as strong today as it was in 1942 in the midst of war. The diagnosis of postwar psychology was profound.

Even if Wilder's comic telescoping of history sometimes suggests that man never changes, while struggles constantly repeat themselves, yet he does invoke a view of thousands and millions of years. In breaking up the neat little myths of "modern" history, and suggesting that man's separate achievements in science, art and philosophy are all part of a continuous series of events, he has cleared the way for a dynamic vision of time. In showing that civilization is not the blind result of destiny, but something constantly achieved by human will, and in danger of being lost if the vision is lost, he gives perhaps the most inspiring picture yet drawn of man creating his own history. Here are most of the materials for that new vision. It remains for other playwrights to complete the task and build a vision of man secure in the long view of history, in his present control of time, and in his creative control of the future.

Which vision will prevail? Will men accept the vision of destruction and like Hitler grimly watch the world collapse on top of them, or will they try to adapt themselves to a slowly changing time? The revolutionist finds the vision of destruction very cheerful because of his mystic assurance that a new world will spring, phoenix-like, from the ashes.

But most people know too well the painful cost of rebuilding after a conflagration. Yet they have no intention of abandoning the science, speed, machines, cities that have caused them to try to live for the moment. Every commitment they have made to the age proclaims against the myth of destruction. They may be haunted by it, but they do not believe it. Somehow, they believe, they can find the way to the future through those very aspects of the twentieth century that are frightening at the moment. Somehow the path to the present, if it can be traced again, will indicate the path to the future.

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The longer view has no such masochistic enticement as the view of destruction. If *A Streetcar Named Desire* is the death rattle of civilization, it gives a vivid rattle. The short vision of time confirms the low esteem man has of himself—the fear that twentieth century man is not equal to the world he is creating. It may be that the long view must wait until man thinks more highly of himself. But it could also be that man cannot think better of himself until he creates, in his plays and movies and history books, a new vision of time and history.

Another in the series of AMERICAN SCHOLAR PORTRAITS,
"Albert Schweitzer," by Emory Ross,
will appear in the Winter 1949-50 number.

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Sidney Hillman: Leader of the Amalgamated

Charles A. Madison

THE extraordinary development of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers from an outcast organization to a position of leadership in organized labor is due largely to Sidney Hillman, the immigrant youth who by a combination of remarkable astuteness and unswerving honesty succeeded in rising to the heights of national eminence. As head of the union from its inception in 1914 till his death in 1946, he not only gave it exemplary status among labor organizations, but made it the springboard for the federation of trade unions the world over.

Tailors were among the first American workers to unionize. One of their early strikes occurred in Philadelphia in 1827. Six years later the New York tailors organized the Union Trade Society of Journeymen Tailors; a short time after that, twenty of its members were found guilty of "conspiring" to form a union. With the rapid expansion of the industry after the Civil War, local unions sprang up sporadically—followed by abortive efforts at national organization. Outstanding among union tailors was Uriah S. Stephens, founder of the Knights of Labor in 1869.

After 1880 the large influx of immigrants into the needle trades

✪ Several articles by CHARLES A. MADISON, college editor of Henry Holt and Company, have appeared in THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR. Mr. Madison is the author of *Critics and Crusaders*, and is now at work on *Labor's Progress: Unionization and Leadership*.

This article, adapted from a chapter of *Labor's Progress: Unionization and Leadership* (to be published by Harper & Bros. in 1950), is intended to depict a superior labor leader and to contrast him with the less desirable one delineated in the article on William Hutcheson which appeared in the Spring.

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brought the sweatshop system into full flower. Long workdays, unsanitary conditions, and very low wages finally forced these hard-pressed newcomers to seek the protection of a trade union. In 1891 they formed the United Garment Workers Union. Unfortunately the leaders, conservative craft unionists, showed little concern for the mass of unskilled workers. Supported financially by the sale of union labels to manufacturers of work clothes, and backed by the Americanized cutters, they ignored the demands of the oppressed sweatshop workers for relief.

In 1910 the men's clothing workers of Chicago rebelled. It was a spontaneous demonstration of the overflow of their exasperation. In a short time 40,000 timorous but aggrieved immigrants were picketing their factories without organized leadership and in the face of fierce police brutality. Thomas Rickert, president of the United Garment Workers, came to Chicago to put an end to the rebellion, but the embattled strikers rejected his unsympathetic intercession. Month after month they held out despite acute hardship, and when they were finally defeated they did not despair. For they were greatly encouraged by the fact that thousands of their fellows had obtained a favorable settlement from the largest of the clothing firms—Hart, Schaffner and Marx.

That the strike bore fruit at all was largely the work of one of the emergent leaders of the struggle—a youth of twenty-three named Sidney Hillman. Born of pious Lithuanian Jews in 1887 and receiving a typically orthodox education, he become interested in secular studies at the age of fifteen and decided to devote himself to them despite his father's strenuous objection. Like many other Russian youths of his time, he became involved in anti-czarist activities, and was incarcerated for six months during his nineteenth year. To avoid further persecution by the police, he went first to an uncle in Manchester, England, and seven months later to friends in Chicago, arriving there in August, 1907.

For a year and a half he worked as a stock clerk in Sears, Roebuck and Company. When he was laid off for the lack of business as a consequence of the 1907 depression, he found work as an apprentice cutter in one of the factories of Hart, Schaffner and Marx. For some weeks he received no wages, but by the time of the strike in 1910

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he was earning eleven dollars a week. All this time he continued his informal studies, and read and reflected a great deal. Though not an active socialist, he had read Marx's *Capital* sympathetically, and nursed a passion for social justice. He smarted under the onerous conditions in the factory, and the strike released in him the urge to devote himself to his fellow workers—to do for them what his rabbinical grandfathers had done for the poor in their communities. Later he explained:

> The rabbis in our family were not outstanding, but the rank-and-file kind that are called upon more to help than to lead. Concern in the everyday problems of working people was their job, so I took it for granted it had to be mine.

The lack of experienced strike leaders enabled him to become a member of the strike committee. His logical reasoning, quick intelligence, and selfless devotion soon impressed everyone who had dealings with him. He quickly gained the confidence not only of the strikers and interested civic leaders, but also of Joseph Schaffner, the cultivated and humane head of Hart, Schaffner and Marx.

When the strike revealed to Schaffner how much he had unwittingly mistreated the workers in his several factories, he determined to make amends by democratizing his relations with his employees. With the aid of such men as Clarence Darrow, Professor Earl Dean Warren and John E. Williams, he in time developed relatively successful industrial relations between his firm and its thousands of employees. From 1911 to the present, both sides have left to arbitration all differences and grievances as they have arisen. Young Hillman, as the workers' chief deputy, was at the very center of this extraordinary experiment in labor relations. His insistence on tolerance and moderation strengthened and cemented the spirit of cooperation; his exceptional tactfulness and gift for friendship helped him to win both sides to his principle of reasonableness.

In the men's clothing industry as a whole, however, working conditions remained at the sweatshop level. Sporadic strikes in New York and other clothing centers resulted in little or no gain. Late in 1913, after feverish preparation, a general strike closed down the New York factories. As thousands of the workers had previously

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joined the United Garment Workers, President Rickert took it upon himself to arrange a settlement. Most of the strikers, however, considered this a brazen betrayal. Consequently, they rejected his leadership and fought on until they obtained more advantageous terms.

Feeling against Rickert spread from the New York workers to those in other cities. Agitation to depose his administration at the next convention of the union became widespread. To obviate this possibility, Rickert moved the meeting to Nashville, far from the major clothing centers. Nevertheless, the rebellion took place, and a rump session elected a new slate of officers, with Sidney Hillman as the unanimously acclaimed president. Samuel Gompers and the other officers of the American Federation of Labor refused to recognize the new officers despite their claim that they represented the majority of the members. The rebels thereupon met again in convention and formed the Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America. Definitely radical in temper, led by a group of officers armed with the enthusiasm of youth and the strength of exceptional ability, the new union fearlessly faced not only Rickert's vindictive tactics and Gompers' official antagonism, but the intensified opposition of the autocratic sweatshop employers.

A month after the Amalgamated was established, the New York employers struck the first blow by locking out their workers in January, 1915. Still inadequately organized and without a strike fund, the new union held fast—forcing the manufacturers to concede defeat a month later. When the same employers provoked another stoppage the following July, they were again quickly defeated and made to settle on terms favorable to their workers.

Hillman was now ready to devote himself to the organization of men's clothing workers in other cities. In Chicago he found all the employers except Schaffner bitterly anti-union. After months of preparation among the workers, he called them out on strike in the fall of 1915. The struggle was brutal and violent, resulting in the death of two strikers and in the beating and jailing of many hundreds. Hillman soon perceived the impossibility of complete victory and succeeded in negotiating a partially favorable settlement. Full union recognition came to the Chicago workers after their successful strike in 1919.

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World War I served to strengthen the Amalgamated greatly. The acute need for millions of uniforms caused many manufacturers to resort to sweatshop conditions in their eagerness to accelerate production and augment their profits. Hillman quickly protested to the War Department, and pointed out that uniforms made under unsanitary conditions would endanger the health of the soldiers wearing them. Secretary of War Newton D. Baker readily agreed, and ordered that all army clothing be "manufactured under recognized industrial standards." This ruling enabled the Amalgamated to entrench itself in the industry.

Shortly after the Armistice, Hillman started a campaign for the forty-four-hour week. The New York manufacturers met this demand by locking out their employees. The union fought back hard and soon emerged victorious—becoming the first mass union to win the shorter work week. Immediately thereafter, Hillman went to Chicago to prepare the workers for the strike that was to win them union recognition and various advantages. From there he journeyed to Rochester, the third largest center of men's clothing, and succeeded in persuading the manufacturers that in the long run it was to their advantage to grant their workers full industrial participation. Individual manufacturers in other cities followed the lead of their powerful competitors. Thus by the end of 1919, the Amalgamated had enrolled more than 75 per cent of the workers on men's clothing.

The depression that started late in 1920 and caused considerable unemployment among clothing workers tempted manufacturers in New York and smaller centers to lock out their employees in another effort to break their union. Hillman at once recognized the seriousness of the attack, and began to raise a large strike fund—totaling about $2,000,000 before the stoppage ended—and used it effectively to keep the morale of the strikers at a very high level. The employers, knowing they had to destroy the union or submit to it, attacked the Amalgamated not only on the picket line, but in the courts and in the press. For six months the workers remained steadfast in the face of threats and abuse—in the end forcing the manufacturers to capitulate. The victory was largely due to Hillman's constructive and cooperative approach to the well-being of

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the industry as a whole. It was on his insistence that the manufacturers agreed to the employment of an impartial chairman to arbitrate the labor-management disputes in the industry.

Workers in other cities did not fare so well. Acting in accord with Hillman's solid industrial principles, the Amalgamated yielded ground where necessary, without lessening either its prestige or its strength. Thus when the impartial chairman in Chicago ruled that, in view of the business recession, the lower cost of living in 1921 made a wage cut of 10 per cent advisable, the union acquiesced as a matter of principle.

Once conditions improved, however, the Amalgamated resumed its aggressive activity. The problem of work security was given concentrated attention. Hillman put the matter thus:

> Unless you can assure a man and woman when they are at work that they will be given a livelihood when they want to work, whether there is work or not, you are not going to have the labor problem solved. That is the curse confronting labor—the fear of loss of the job.

The delegates at the 1922 convention of the Amalgamated adopted a resolution in favor of "unemployment wages." That same year negotiations were begun with Chicago employers, and after exhaustive discussion, both parties agreed to raise an unemployment fund from equal contributions by workers and employers. As a consequence, Chicago workers received a total of $6,000,000 between 1924 and 1932 in unemployment insurance. In 1928, similar funds were established in New York and Rochester.

Throughout the 1920's, the Amalgamated was chiefly concerned with the full unionization of the industry. Firms which refused to deal with the union were fought until they capitulated or went out of business. With friendly employers, it collaborated to their mutual advantage. Hillman did not hesitate to lend as much as $100,000 to sympathetic manufacturers to tide them over temporary financial difficulties.

Employers soon perceived the value of dealing with Hillman. They recognized his honesty, his fairness, his concern for the well-being of the industry, and they in time welcomed his offers of co-operation and assistance. For the Amalgamated was one of the first

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unions to install efficiency methods for the benefit of employers. Those who were willing to share profits equitably with their workers were given the advantages of the union's best engineering skills. Since many of them were small and could not well engage their own research technicians, this assistance by the union greatly accelerated their rate of profit. Their employees, of course, benefited from this prosperity.

By 1929 only the Philadelphia factories remained unorganized. For fifteen years, strike after strike was defeated by a combination of ruthless employers, brutal police and compliant judges. In preparing for the final assault on this open-shop bastion, Hillman made use of astute strategy and of the entire resources of the Amalgamated. In the final effort, he approached the largest customers of the stubborn manufacturers and persuaded them to intercede in behalf of the union. The move was completely successful, and by March, 1930, the Philadelphia clothing factories were fully organized.

During the 1920's and later, the Amalgamated launched several social and cultural services for the benefit of its members. Specially prepared pamphlets and popular lectures became part of its adult education program. Its banks in New York and Chicago specialized in small loans at reasonable interest, and offered other services of value to its labor clientele. Equally successful was its program of cooperative housing, which has made it possible for hundreds of families to live in comfort at low rentals. Recently it has also inaugurated a large-scale health program.

When the great depression after 1929 called for constructive thought, Hillman spoke out with a wisdom and practical realism that brought him to the forefront of eminent Americans. He had long been thinking in terms exceeding the confines of the Amalgamated. With the nation in the throes of economic panic, he emphasized the overlooked truism that the chief victims of the depression were the millions of unemployed and their families. In speeches and published articles, he enunciated the thesis that all who were willing to work were entitled not only to jobs, but to certain social benefits. Citing his own experience as a labor leader, he maintained that in order to avoid economic crises in the future, business must democratize itself; that for a union to serve its members effectively, it must be able

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"to share in the responsibilities of management and to participate in the administration of industry"; that unless business men succeeded in overcoming their managerial limitations, it was up to the government to prod them into speeding this economic readjustment. Hillman was certain that this move would further industrial efficiency and bring a higher standard of living for all.

Eager for immediate action toward the alleviation of the unemployed, he conceived the plan which shortly thereafter materialized in the establishment of the National Economic Planning Council. Testifying in 1931 before the Senate Committee on Manufactures, he declared:

> The problem confronting us today is to find jobs for people out of work, and to maintain a standard of living to match our productive capacity. Higher wages, not lower wages; more goods, not less goods; more jobs, not fewer jobs: that is the American solution.

President Hoover refused to heed this advice. When Franklin D. Roosevelt came to Washington, however, he immediately made use of Hillman's deep understanding of modern industrial relations. As a member of the Labor Advisory Board, he became the spokesman for American workers.

The depression in the early 1930's played havoc with the clothing industry, and the Amalgamated suffered accordingly. Sweatshop conditions were reintroduced by unscrupulous manufacturers. To stop this suicidal regression, Hillman instituted a campaign in 1932 against the new outlying sweatshops. Success came with the establishment of the Men's Clothing Code Authority. Hillman obtained the cooperation of friendly employers in the attack upon the mean and disreputable manufacturers.

With the men's clothing industry again fully unionized under the Code Authority, the Amalgamated turned to the accessory trades. In these shops child labor, long hours and low wages were rampant. The Amalgamated's energetic and ingenious organizers, backed by the full strength of the union, invaded the sweatshop areas in a half dozen eastern states and put into action a well-planned and spectacular campaign. Working with a crusading enthusiasm, backed by interested liberals and civic workers everywhere, they soon en-

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rolled 20,000 shirtmakers—quadrupling their wages and halving their hours of labor. Within two years the number of union shirtmakers grew to 40,000. This notable success made it easier for the Amalgamated to help organize the neckwear and glove makers, the laundry workers, and the cleaners and dyers. All of these groups of workers greatly benefited from the backing and direction given them by the alert and aggressive parent union.

Hillman was quick to perceive the great opportunity opened to labor by the Roosevelt administration. To him the New Deal laws favoring workers and their unions were a challenge to organized labor which it could not afford to ignore. With the Amalgamated finally accepted by the American Federation of Labor, Hillman readily joined John L. Lewis and other advocates of industrial unionism in a campaign "to organize the unorganized" in the large mass-production industries. When the conservative leaders in the Federation succeeded in blocking this organizational effort, Hillman, Lewis, and a half dozen others proceeded to form the Committee on Industrial Organization (later changed to Congress of Industrial Organizations, when the split from the Federation took place). Lewis became its dynamic head, but Hillman was the driving intelligence behind the group's great work of labor organization. Active in all C.I.O. campaigns, he took complete charge of the campaign to unionize the textile workers. At his urging, the Amalgamated contributed $500,000 and many of its best organizers. After ten months of agitation, the United Textile Workers Union boasted a growth from 30,000 to 450,000.

Eager to keep the New Deal administration in office, Hillman joined with Lewis in 1936 to work for Roosevelt's re-election by means of their Labor's Nonpartisan League. When Lewis rejected Roosevelt's candidacy in 1940, Hillman and Philip Murray kept him from carrying any of the C.I.O. unions with him. Hillman also became one of the founders of the American Labor Party in New York, and the energetic director of the C.I.O. Political Action Committee which worked so successfully to re-elect Roosevelt in 1944. It was his belief that labor must be organized not only industrially, but also politically, if it wanted to maintain a liberal government in power. He said:

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Organized labor represents the hard core around which all progressive political action must be built. But it has no program and no objectives which are not shared by the great majority of forward-looking Americans.

Meantime, of course, he did not neglect the progress of the Amalgamated. In 1937 he succeeded, by an act of astute statesmanship, in establishing the labor-management relations in the men's clothing industry on a nationwide basis. This procedure soon proved advantageous to the industry as a whole, and enabled Hillman to obtain favorable agreements for all the workers at once, with a minimum of exertion and a maximum of good will. He also furthered the stabilization of the industry and the equalization of labor costs, thereby making possible a higher wage level without hindering employers from operating their factories at a fair rate of profit. During the highly productive war period, he persuaded the employers' associations to establish health and old-age benefits for the members of the Amalgamated.

With the world again torn by war, President Roosevelt once more turned to Hillman as the man best able to organize the labor manpower of the country for the gigantic task of war preparedness. First as a member of the National Defense Advisory Commission, and later as joint head of the Office of Production Management, he devoted his full energy and enthusiasm to the mobilization and indoctrination of the workers all over the country. After 1942, however, ill health (the first of a series of heart attacks) and discouragement over the growing power of large industrialists and conservative bureaucrats led him to resign from the new War Production Board.

Although the doctors urged Hillman to slacken the pace of his activities, he continued to drive himself to the utmost of his strength. His establishment and direction of the C.I.O.-P.A.C. during the 1944 presidential campaign taxed him severely. Immediately afterwards, instead of resting, he plunged full-force into still another enterprise. Believing that a union of organized labor the world over was the best possible assurance not only of justice for the mass of workers, but also of peace to all mankind, he helped mightily to nurse the new organization into flower. In September, 1945, the World Federation of Trade Unions, representing 70,000,000 union members from fifty-six countries, became a reality.

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The coil of Hillman's life was fast unwinding. His many intensive exertions had overtaxed his heart. At the 1946 convention of the Amalgamated, he was a very sick man driven by an acute sense of urgency. His "closing remarks" were the words of a rabbinical sage offering his valediction.

> We want to have an America where the inventions of science will be at the disposal of every American family, not merely for the few who can afford them; an America that will have no sense of insecurity and which will make it possible for all groups, regardless of race, creed or color, to live in friendship, to be real neighbors; an America that will carry its great mission of helping other countries to help themselves, thinking not in terms of exploitation, but of creating plenty abroad so we can all enjoy it here in America. . . . Delegates, I cannot impress upon you too much that this is going to be a greater, better America, a greater, better world, built by the cooperative effort of the common men and women of our own land and of the world.

Two months later, on July 10, 1946, he was dead.

The Amalgamated evidenced the soundness of his lifework by remaining dedicated to his policies and principles. His successor Jacob Potofsky and the other officers trained by him continued to maintain the union on its high level of labor statesmanship.

Diligent investigation has failed to disclose any major flaw in Sidney Hillman's character and life work. Although he was actively engaged in many battles with both labor leaders and employers, he left few enemies among them. John L. Lewis once referred to him disparagingly as "the Lithuanian pantsmaker," but the epithet—incorrect, incidentally—merely indicates how little Lewis the phrasemaker could say against him. Conservative politicians disliked his social philosophy and feared his effectiveness in presidential campaigns, but the best attack their publicity men could evolve was that President Roosevelt had advised his Democratic lieutenants to "clear it with Sidney."

Hillman has been occasionally accused of being a Communist by persons who tend to confuse communism with the New Deal. In fact, he had at no time favored extreme radicalism. In 1922 he visited Russia, and was deeply impressed with the suffering of the people

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for the lack of adequate clothing. On his return to this country, he was instrumental in forming the Russian-American Industrial Corporation for the purpose of reorganizing the Russian clothing industry. This act was purely humanitarian in nature, as he well knew that Europe, then as now, could not be reconstructed unless Russia also was reconstructed. Later, he did not hesitate to work with Communists in the building of the C.I.O. and in the furtherance of liberal causes. At no time, however, did he permit them to achieve dominance; when it was necessary to curb them, he did so with unflinching firmness. Consequently the attacks upon him in the Communist press at times became sheer vilification. . . .

All things considered, Sidney Hillman was in a positive sense probably the ablest labor leader this country has yet produced. Samuel Gompers was a founder, a groundbreaker, but he was too much of a rugged individualist to appreciate the needs and direction of labor in an era of unbridled capitalism. John L. Lewis, for all his driving ability and dynamic personality, has been too strongly dominated by an overweening vanity to place the good of labor above his peevish pride. Hillman, however, possessed a breadth of view and a love of man that caused him to identify his surging ambition with the welfare of his fellows.

As a union leader, he had the great asset of being a very skillful negotiator. Neither a bully nor a bluffer, he approached every labor dispute with the aim not of getting the better of his opponents, but of narrowing the area of disagreement and widening the range of concurrence. Suave, firm yet fair, quick-witted, always alert for points of common advantage, he evoked confidence and cooperation from his adversaries at the conference table. Certain that right and logic were on his side—that his demands in behalf of the workers were neither exorbitant nor impracticable—he was always ready to depend upon the results of arbitration. It was his insistence on fair-dealing that made possible the development of the arbitration machinery with an impartial chairman—a great boon to amity in labor-management relations.

He had the greatness of mind to admit mistakes readily. Like all men of superior ability and practical wisdom, he acted pragmatically —always keeping an eye on the chief end in view, and seeking to at-

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tain it with whatever means he had at his command. When he was not sure of the next step, he experimented on a small scale, by means of trial and error, until he found the right direction.

Despite his deep awareness of human foibles and failings, he loved his fellows with all his heart. He hated injustice and abhorred oppression. He was moved not by party labels, but by human aspirations. From the very beginning, he dreamed of a better world. Although he began by fighting for additional pennies for the sweated tailors, he gradually broadened his activities to include the welfare of all labor—and all mankind. It is this palpable achievement that will stand as a monument to his greatness as a labor statesman.

Coming in the Winter Number . . .

Brains and Calculating Machines . . . . . *John E. Pfeiffer*
The New Criticism and the Democratic Tradition . *Robert Gorham Davis*
The State of American Publishing . . . . . *John Farrar*
The Shock of Aging . . . . . *Martin Gumpert*

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American Scholar Forum . . .

AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY AND ITS CONSEQUENCES

In this number, the FORUM *is devoted, for the first time, to a single article. The Editor and the Consulting Editor were both so impressed with the importance of Mr. Sears's article that they felt it must be printed in full. Its great length (in terms of the usual run of* AMERICAN SCHOLAR *articles) meant that we could only print it in the double-column pages of the* FORUM. *In view of the department's being given over in this way to a single article, we are particularly anxious to receive and publish in the Winter number* (THE READER REPLIES) *as many comments, favorable or unfavorable, as possible.*—EDITOR

Walking Backward into the Future

Laurence Sears

IN JULY, 1914, intelligent men knew that there could never again be another great war. Experts agreed that the world had become such an economic unit that war would be a catastrophe for all. To quote the title of a widely read book, war was *The Great Illusion*—it couldn't happen; when it did, men could account for it only on the score that the German leaders were so evil, characterized by such an insane folly, that the dictates of reason and humanity no longer held for them. The solution was simple and obvious—destroy that leadership and thus make this the last war, the war to end war. Since the cause of the war was bad men, the cure was simply to get rid of them! Then the world would be made safe for democracy. It was what has been called the devil theory of history, that crises are created not by objective causes but by evil persons who are always with us, but who, for some mysterious reason, at times fall into positions of leadershp.

It was that answer to the question as to why World War I broke that set the stage for much of what has happened in the last thirty-five years. It turned our attention not to the objective situation, but to individuals; not to causes, but to symptoms. When the war was over, we therefore felt no need to

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re-examine the bases of our society. Having destroyed the bad men who had brought on the war, and not having any particular responsibility for changing the basic conditions that had created it, we could turn back to the same old world and the same old solutions. We still depended on the Monroe Doctrine, the Open Door, and Freedom of the Seas. We refused to join the League of Nations; we re-emphasized our isolation; we became increasingly suspicious of international force; and pacifism spread. Since power, on an international scale, could not be controlled for moral ends, we could only repudiate its use. Further, there was an almost complete unconcern for the international implications of our domestic policy. Our tariff was our business, and normalcy our goal.

All of this is simply to say that we were uninterested in any basic analysis, either of the causes of that war or of the other startling manifestations of the time. It is incredible that we should have been so largely untouched by the Russian Revolution and the rise of fascism. How many were there who suggested that these upheavals were manifestations of a world-wide situation, symptoms of a world-wide illness? It was years before we asked, with any sense of urgency, what they were, what the conditions were that had brought them, and what the implications were of their spread. One might even question how many there are who could *today*, with any degree of precision, define either communism or fascism.

We assumed the triumph of middle-class democracy, not realizing that the tide was already ebbing, and that before a quarter of a century should pass, democracy would have perished in most of Europe, and the middle class would have been largely destroyed. We kept our eyes on the symptoms, rather than the causes; and so, to use a phrase of R. H. Tawney, "we walked reluctantly backward into the future."

The year 1941 found us little better prepared, except perhaps militarily, than we had been in 1914. Pearl Harbor marked the end of isolation, but there was no more concern for the underlying causes than there had been before, and the goals of the war were defined in even narrower terms. Whereas during the First World War there had been a determination to make it a struggle for democracy, now military victory was paramount. Almost everything was subordinated to that end, both domestically and internationally. We were fighting because we had been attacked; we would cease only with unconditional surrender.

Mr. Witherow, former president of the N.A.M., expressed a feeling common to many when he said: "I am not making guns or tanks to win a people's revolution. I am not fighting for a quart of milk for every Hottentot, or for a T.V.A. on the Danube." It was for a minority that Mrs. Pearl Buck spoke when she said that "the victory over the Axis does not mean a victory over fascism." There were few who agreed with her, even as there are few today who realize that a victory over Russia would not mean a victory over communism. Symptoms, not causes, were still our concern.

As one studies the events of the past three years, the realization grows that it is not possible to detect any sustained purposes or clear patterns in our national behavior. It is a record of confusion. No single theme will bear the weight of the contradictory evidence. It is far too simple to insist that our foreign policy has been motivated by the determination to encircle Russia, even as it requires a large measure of falsification to prove that we have primarily sought profits. Not even security has been consistently sought. Again we seem to have been reluctantly walking backward, and perhaps that is why we find ourselves today on the brink of losing the peace again.

The record of the past three and a half years is largely a record of failure. As matters now stand, eastern Europe is in the Russian orbit. Greece is a breeding place for endless trouble. Germany is divided. Italy and France tremble on the edge of violent political changes. China is, to all intents and purposes, Communist, and the reservoir of goodwill we once had in the Far East seems utterly exhausted. And to those specific situations might be added a progressive polarization throughout the world into the Far Right and Far Left, with consequent

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loss of influence of moderate groups everywhere, and a decreasing possibility of rational solutions.

Perhaps the time has come for us to re-examine the basic premises of our foreign policy: the assumptions, all too often unconscious, on which we have been acting. There is a quotation from Archibald MacLeish which is particularly apt as we start this inquiry—"We know all the answers—all the answers—it is the questions that we do not know." That is profoundly true, and that is why our emphasis should lie not primarily in locating answers, but on formulating the right questions.

The first one we need to ask is whether or not we have a foreign policy? Have we anything more than a series of opportunistic reactions to the immediate situations which we face? Any genuine foreign policy that is not to be marked by a continuing series of failures must have certain requirements. It must give us national security; it must be flexible, relative to the changing situations that we face; it must be consistent in the sense that one aspect, one part of that policy, shall not undercut other aspects or parts; and, finally, it must be the kind of policy which in its short-run aspects, concerned necessarily with immediate security, shall not deny the possibility of achieving long-range security. If we are going to have that kind of policy, coherent and consistent, then we are going to have to make an examination of some the assumptions upon which our present policy rests. Unfortunately any attempt to do this poses a most difficult task. I doubt whether we are ever very conscious of what our most basic premises are, even in our everyday procedures, until somehow, sometime, we are brought face to face with their consequences.

Take the assumption mentioned above, following World War I, that middle-class democracy would inevitably triumph. That was our expectation. It seems incredible, but perhaps if we had realized that that was what we were assuming, we might have been able to evaluate and criticize it. It was the very fact that we did not know it, but acted on it nonetheless, that made it so dangerous. I doubt if anyone in the State Department faces a specific decision—as to what should be done about China, for example—by starting with the question as to what our assumptions are or should be. Rather, they do what seems best, and then perhaps leave it to some philosopher to raise the question of assumptions afterwards. Furthermore, it needs to be stressed that in this process of locating our basic assumptions, we have to mistrust profoundly our verbalizations. We do not discover the bases of our actions by listening to ourselves talk. We locate them only as we watch what we do. One might well remember Emerson's reminder: "What you do speaks so loud that I cannot hear what you say."

With this much of an introduction, let us proceed with the job of locating the premises of our foreign policy, keeping clearly in mind that we are now trying to describe what our assumptions actually have been, not to evaluate them. These are descriptions —not prescriptions. We are not, at the moment, saying that we like them or don't like them. We are not saying that they are true assumptions—only that these look like the ones upon which we actually have been and are now operating.

In the attempt to locate these assumptions, it is obviously necessary to start with actual situations, particularly those that we have faced since the end of the war. Here are some of the more important ones: American participation in the United Nations; the occupation of enemy nations; the Cold War with Russia; the search for allies; the threat to Greece; the civil war in China. As we look at these situations and the policies formulated to meet them, what have been the actual underlying assumptions and expectations?

We have acted on three assumptions in our relations with the United Nations. *American isolation is impossible.* It would seem that that was the assumption three years ago, and that it is still operating, and not merely on a verbal level. Another one, held three years ago, was that collective security was necessary, and might be achieved through the United Nations. It is difficult to say how far this second one is an actual

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operating assumption at the present time, but the Atlantic Pact seems to make it clear that it has been rephrased, although perhaps unconsciously, into something like this: *Collective security is not possible in the near future, and the United Nations is not of great significance.* A third assumption upon which we operate, and of which we are very thoroughly aware, is that *national sovereignty must be maintained.* So much for underlying assumptions with regard to our participation in the United Nations.

As regards the occupied nations, with particular reference, of course, to Germany and Japan, the original premise seems to have been that basic social reform was necessary. That certainly was what lay behind the discussions on breaking up the great German monopolies and having adequate control of the Ruhr. It was what caused the discussion of the land tenure system in Japan and the necessity for breaking the power of the Zaibatsu. In fact, so sure were we of the necessity of social reform that in the State Department document laying down the policy for Japan there was a statement explicitly recognizing the possibility of violent revolution, and insisting that we should not interfere to prevent it.

> The policy is to use the existing form of government in Japan, not to support it. Changes in the form of government initiated by the Japanese people or government in the direction of modifying its feudal and authoritarian tendencies are to be permitted and favored. In the event that effectuation of such changes involves the use of force by the Japanese people or government against persons opposed thereto, the Supreme Commander should intervene only when it is necessary to insure the security of his forces and the attainment of all other objectives of the Occupation.[1]

Originally we were determined to destroy the power of the leaders of Japan and Germany by altering the political and economic structure which had brought them into power. Unfortunately, as the years have passed, the costs of occupation have proved heavier than anticipated, and pressure has grown to turn those countries into self-supporting units as rapidly as possible. The increasing threat of Russia has caused us to view our former enemies as potential allies, to be strengthened rather than weakened. One American officer has remarked: "Japan is going to be the American pillbox of the Far East."

Finally, basic social reconstruction seems to require us to encourage the kind of an economic system that we do not have at home. It would apparently mean that we would sponsor a degree of socialization inconsistent with domestic American practice. It is not surprising that even though the objective *situations* which had created fascism have remained the same, the present assumption should be that *recovery rather than reform is our necessary goal.* A Tokyo correspondent wrote recently: "The reform phase of General MacArthur's rule of Japan is over, and the industrial phase is slated to succeed." As for Germany, on March 12, 1948, it was announced in Berlin that dissolution of German industrial monopolies, except for those producing consumer goods, had been halted by the American Military Government, reversing a basic policy of the postwar years. This was done in spite of the almost complete agreement as to the role of the monopolies in creating the conditions which bred fascism.

It is hard to untangle the assumptions upon which we are acting in connection with the Cold War with Russia. There was a belief in 1945 that might have been phrased vaguely in these terms: Cooperation with the Soviet Union may be difficult, but will be possible. Certainly we are not operating on that basis now. Two of our present assumptions seem clear: *The threat of war is sharp: we must get tough.* Furthermore, we are acting on the belief that *Russian aggression is caused not by acts of the United States, but by leaders committed to the Marxist dogma.* That was the burden of the famous article, "The Sources of Soviet Conduct" by "X."

To put it negatively, we assume that it is not acts of ours which create a sense of insecurity in the minds of the Russian leaders. It is not primarily our possession of the atomic bomb, our overseas bases, or our

[1] The Department of State. *The Axis in Defeat.* Publication 2423, p. 109.

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military preparation, that is responsible for Russian aggressiveness. It is their Marxian ideology and their fanatical dictatorship that have brought the Cold War.

Inevitably, we face the necessity of gaining allies. That is an important part of our foreign policy, and perhaps the aspect that we are most reluctant to face. As one looks around the globe to see what kind of allies we are acquiring, one sees, of course, the nations of western Europe, including England. In every possible way, we are trying to strengthen that alliance, but we also have to recognize that although it is done in a pretty left-handed fashion, we are nonetheless in effect allying ourselves with the governments of China, Argentina, Spain, Greece, Turkey and Saudi-Arabia, and a number of other governments that could scarcely be classified as either democratic or liberty-loving. Therefore, we may conclude that our operating assumption, as we look for allies, is: *Where we must choose between communism and reaction, the latter is preferable since fascism is no longer an active threat.* Furthermore, *it is more essential that we have the support of governments than the loyalty of peoples.*

Finally, *we want as allies stable governments, not necessarily democratic ones.* As I said, I doubt whether we like very much to face the implications of some of our alliances. But when one hears the arguments for supporting the Chiang Kai-shek government in China and realizes that almost the sole basis for this support during the last two years has been the threat of communism, and knowing also that it was a government which did not have the loyalty of the people, or their interests at heart, it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that our assumptions were those listed above. In somewhat different, but brutally explicit, terms, the Foreign Affairs Sub-committee of the House declared:

> It is highly preferable that the United States have a free though unmoral government in China than to have a hostile government no matter how pure and moral but dominated by Communist influences. . . .[2]

[2] Quoted in *Japan Diary*, by Mark Gayn. New York: Sloane, 1948, p. 509.

Any enemy of Russia is a friend of ours!

As for specific means of checking Russia, the assumptions here seem relatively obvious: *Russia's military expansion in strategic areas must and can be stopped by force, which will either result in the overthrow of the Soviet regime or which will, in the long run, soften the policy of Soviet leadership. Her ideological expansion must and can be stopped by economic aid.* The Marshall Plan for Europe was passed in Congress largely on the basis of that argument.

Finally, we face, in many areas, potential or actual revolutionary situations. It is more difficult to locate our operating assumptions at this point. One would seem to be that *all revolutions stem from Moscow, and are a threat to our security.* Furthermore, we are apparently committed to the position that *revolutionary change is not necessary.* Lastly, there is the premise, widely held by some, that *it is necessary to destroy communism abroad lest we permit radicalism to be strengthened at home.*

On the domestic level, the traditional attitude is apparently still held: *It is possible to separate domestic and international policies.* Had that not been the case, it is difficult to see how we could have begun to end rationing on August 15, 1945, with all the serious international implications of an American inflation, or have terminated Lend Lease on August 21, 1945, thereby making recovery throughout the world so much more difficult.

After we have made our assumptions explicit, the next step is obviously to criticize them. But before doing so, it might be well to stop and explore the nature of our time, so that we may be in a position not merely to evaluate the assumptions, but specifically to explore the extent to which they are relevant to the day in which we are living.

II

There is an historical contrast which sets the stage for such an examination, and which helps to give perspective. From the time of the Treaty of Vienna in 1815 to the outbreak of World War I in 1914, the world had relative peace, prosperity and

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stability. Of course there were wars, even as there were depressions, and during the middle of the century there was strong revolutionary ferment, but the fact remains that the wars did not spread across a continent, the revolutions held no world-wide significance, and the depressions were temporary. It was a century of hope.

In contrast, look at the events of the past thirty-five years—World War I; the Russian Revolution and the spread of communism; the rise of fascism and its destruction at such fearful cost; the worst depression the world ever saw; World War II, ending with the bomb that fell on Hiroshima. The significant question, never adequately faced, is why all these things have happened in little more than three decades, when there had been a century preceding without any catastrophes of such proportions? Until we have at least asked the question *why*, we shall continue to deal not with the causes, but with the symptoms of what is happening in the world at the present time. We will continue to ask *who?* instead of *what?*

Lincoln Steffens, in his autobiography, tells a story that might well be taken to heart. He had been carrying on his investigations into the corruption in American cities, and had come to the conclusion that it was futile to ask *who* was responsible. The dishonest bosses might be thrown out of power and jailed, but the situations which had created them remained to corrupt others. And so he pleaded that men should examine the conditions, rather than merely assess blame and guilt. He was speaking on that theme one evening, and at the close someone in the audience arose to explain that he was not meeting the mind of his audience; they wanted to know who was responsible for this corruption. And Steffens replied:

> Most people, you know, say it was Adam. But Adam, you remember, he said that it was Eve, the woman, she did it. And Eve said no, no, it wasn't she; it was the serpent. And that's where you clergy have stuck ever since. You blame that serpent, Satan. Now I come and I am trying to show you that it was, it is, the apple.[3]

[3] *The Autobiography of Lincoln Steffens.* New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1931, p. 574.

If we are to look for "the apple," the objective situation, rather than merely seeking the guilty, we shall have to concern ourselves with the nature of our age. I want to list five of what seem to me to be the outstanding characteristics of our time:

1. In the first place, this is the age of science, not in the sense that the twentieth century has seen the beginning of the scientific adventure, but that it is in recent decades that the work of the preceding centuries has come to fruition, and its implications can be seen. The revolutionary force that has changed the face of the earth, overturning political systems and bringing new economic orders, has not been political doctrine or economic theory, but scientific research and its technological application. We do not, I think, see clearly the profound revolutionary impact of the scientific development. The Marxists have usually been given blame or credit for having created a revolutionary world. That is nonsense! What they have done is to take advantage of the results of the work of our scientists and technologists. The latter are the ones who passed the death sentence on an old world. A recent article in *Harper's Magazine* quotes a passage by André Siegfried pointing out the profoundly revolutionary role of American technology and business:

> The one really new gospel we have introduced is the revelation, after centuries of passively endured privations, that a man may at last free himself of poverty and, most fantastic innovation of all, that he may actually enjoy his existence. There, perhaps, is the most tangible thing we have taught them: the longing and impatience for the comforts of life! And so, without our wishing it, or even knowing it, we appear as the terrible instigators of social change and revolution. . . . For us, in America, suddenly to see ourselves as "the terrible instigators of social change and revolution" demands so painful a mental readjustment as to be well-nigh impossible at first.[4]

Nor has the impact been limited to the hope it has given men that age-old catastrophes need no longer be endured. It has also spelled the necessity of profound social change. Each new discovery of power has

[4] Isabel Cary Lundberg, "World Revolution, American Plan." Reprint from *Harper's Magazine.*

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brought in its wake a new order. The discovery of steam hastened a capitalistic economy, for it made possible the production of goods on a previously undreamed of scale. Electricity created serious strains within the existing order, and has brought the necessity of unprecedented social control and regulation. One can only speculate as to what the invention and application of atomic energy will do to existing systems. Nor have we come even in sight of the end of that road. Far more significant than the discovery of how to release the energy of the atom, has been the invention of a method of invention which enables us to make discoveries almost at will. It is that which enabled men to create an atomic bomb within half a decade, and it is that which makes certain that scientific inventions of the future will be greater than we have ever dreamed of, and that social change will be more rapid, more complete, and more inevitable. There is the old adage that necessity is the mother of invention, but Veblen was fond of reversing the statement and insisting that invention is the mother of necessity. From new discoveries come new social orders.

2. We live in one world. It is sometimes thought that the Cold War has put an end, at least temporarily, to Mr. Willkie's dream of "one world." It has done nothing of the kind. Neither a cold war nor a hot war can alter the inevitable result of the scientific-technological achievements. It is one world in terms of communication—it is one world in terms of interdependence. It can almost be said that on a world-wide scale *everybody* depends on *everyone* for *everything*. In the nineteenth century we could have a private little domestic depression without affecting large numbers of the world's population. But the peasants of the most distant lands were affected by the Wall Street crash of 1929. In the middle of the nineteenth century, China had the Tai-ping Rebellion—there were not many who were concerned. Today reports of the Chinese Revolution are on the front page of every newspaper, for we have discovered that our fate is intimately bound up with that of the Chinese. And what America does domestically—in relation to the civil rights of its citizens, as regards distribution of income and tax rates, as regards its tariff or the strength of its labor movement—vitally affects peoples in distant lands. On the other hand, we cannot play fast and loose with the liberties of Koreans without ultimately narrowing the area of freedom at home. Burke's statement is far truer today than when he made it: You cannot suppress freedom abroad without destroying it at home. So, too, insecurity abroad means depression at home. That is the justification for E.R.P. It is one world.

3. We live in a world of expanding populations. That fact has been brought home to us within recent years so strongly that we need remind ourselves of only a few of the many figures which have been given us. Java in 1800 had 4.5 millions; in 1948 it had 45 millions. The population of India increases by about 50 million every decade. The Secretariat of the United Nations announced recently that there were in 1947 two hundred million more people in the world than there had been in 1937. Obviously, it is a problem of major proportions to supply the food for so many people; the total world supply of food will have to be increased approximately 150 to 200 per cent to ensure adequate health for all. And without this increase, famine will be the result. But the significant thing is not that there will be people who will starve—that is no new thing. What is new is that men and women who for centuries have regarded famine and starvation as a part of the necessary fate of millions, no longer believe that—no longer are willing to lie down and die. Therefore, we must realize that not only are populations expanding far beyond our present resources for taking care of them, but also that the people of the world are unwilling to accept what would seem to be the inevitable results.

4. We live in a day when change and decay characterize the inherited economic orders. Feudalism, which has survived not only in Asia, but in areas of Europe, is now being called in question centuries after it

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was destroyed in England and France. Capitalism, which seemed to most people twenty-five years ago the most ideal economic system, has either been destroyed or is on the defensive. Socialist economies are the rule in Europe. England has a socialist government; even in the United States the free market seems no longer a live possibility. The issues over which we argue are not whether there must be governmental controls, but only what kind of controls, by whom, and for whom. Nor is there any possibility of preventing this change from continuing and accelerating. The only way to do that would be to destroy our scientists, ban invention, and prohibit technological advance, for these things mean change in our economic institutions. This is not to imply the direction in which that change will go; it is to say that we have struck our tents and are on the march.

5. We are living in a day when the democratic process is profoundly questioned. That, in and of itself, marks one great difference between the present and the period following World War I. At that time, it seemed to us that democracy was advancing throughout the world. Now our problem is to keep it alive in the relatively few countries in which it has survived. The supreme issue of our time, of course, is the question as to whether the necessary social change can be brought democratically, i.e., peacefully, or whether it is going to be brought outside the framework of the democratic system, through violence and revolution. If we forget that fact, forget that this is the all-important question, we can be very sure that neither the Communists nor the Fascists will ignore it. It is no accident that this threat to the parliamentary and democratic tradition comes at a time when the role of the middle class throughout the world is more basically challenged than it has been at any time since the beginning of the Industrial Revolution three centuries ago. Arnold Toynbee has recently made the statement that the future of this class is in question in all the Western nations.

It was the middle class which, if not primarily responsible for the coming of democracy and the spread of liberty, at least created the conditions that made possible their rise, and approved their advent. And yet it is that very middle class which has been, within recent decades, in large part responsible for their destruction in Europe. Following World War I, there was a sharp split between the left and the right. The startling thing was that the far right was largely recruited from members of the middle class who had once fought for representative government and political equality. But when it seemed to them that their power was challenged, and they were forced to choose between fascism and social change, even the kind of change that would have left them their political liberty, they chose fascism. Hitler and Mussolini were the lesser evils. Democracy had come to mean for them not so much parliamentary government or free speech as it had *laissez faire*—the right to make as much money as one pleased, and do with it as one deemed pleasant. One can understand the fear of the middle class—inflation had wiped out many of them, war had destroyed a large percentage of their profit, labor was demanding more and more. Forced to choose between economic change within the democratic framework, and a dictatorship that would bring to an end the freedoms men had so long fought for, they chose fascism.

When the existing system was threatened, as it has been and will be, they turned and allied themselves with the far right. That is fascism, the destruction of democracy by a minority for the sake of preserving its property, privilege and power. It has been this attitude on the part of the middle class which has done so much to bring the democratic idea into disrepute through so wide an area of the world. It became the defender of the *status quo* just at the moment when the *status quo* was most in question.[5]

Briefly, then, one may characterize our time by the statement that we are living in one world, marked on the one hand by the possibility of lifting for the first time in man's history the burden of starvation, pov-

[5] For a brilliant analysis of the role of the middle class see "Democracy Losing by Default" by Nathaniel Peffer. *Political Science Quarterly*, September, 1948.

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erty and fear, and on the other, by the explosive pressures of population, the growing demand for an economic order which will give men both liberty and security, and, finally, by an increasing tendency to look to dictatorship rather than to democracy for the achievement of those ends.

When we cease asking *who* and turn our eyes to the *what*, to the objective situation, we see that we are living in an age of revolutions that come upon us thick and fast, and we know that we have not yet seen the end of them. E. H. Carr realized this early in World War II, and declared that the starting point of any investigation into the problems of that war was the recognition that it was an episode in a revolution. "Whether we like it or not," said he, "we are in the midst of a revolution; any attempt to ignore it, or stem it by a restoration of the past, is futile and disastrous. We need a policy that is both positive and revolutionary." Will we accept this fact? Or will we continue to walk reluctantly backward into the future?

III

It may be useful to stop and remind ourselves what the assumptions behind our present policy apparently are:

1. American isolation is impossible.
2. National sovereignty must be maintained.
3. Collective security is not possible in the near future, and the U.N. is not of great significance.
4. Recovery, rather than reform, is our necessary goal.
5. Russian aggression is due, not to acts of the U.S., but to leaders committed to Marxist dogma.
6. The threat of war is sharp.
7. We must get tough.
8. Where we must choose between communism and reaction, the latter is preferable, since fascism is no longer an active threat. It is more essential that we have the support of governments than the support of peoples.
9. We want as allies stable governments, not necessarily democratic ones.
10. Russia's military expansion in strategic areas must and can be stopped by force,
    a. resulting in internal revolution or
    b. a softening of their policy.
11. Russia's ideological expansion must and can be stopped by economic aid.
12. All revolutions stem from Moscow, and are a threat to our security.
13. Revolutionary change is not necessary.
14. It is necessary to destroy communism abroad lest we permit radicalism to be strengthened at home.
15. It is possible to separate domestic and international policies.

The thing that startles one in glancing over this list is to see how largely irrelevant it is to the nature of our time—or, perhaps better, how such a policy ignores the nature of our times. No wonder that at many points the situation is worse today than it was in 1945. For one thing, there is today far greater polarization, both in terms of issues and of groups, than was true at the close of the war. Perhaps this was an almost inevitable trend, but its seriousness can hardly be exaggerated. Obviously, when ideologies are framed in mutually exclusive terms, and when groups find themselves with almost nothing in common, with no middle area of agreement, the chances of peaceful solution are slight. Unfortunately, American foreign policy has aided this process. Much of the time we have seen the questions revolving around Russian-American relations phrased in mutually exclusive terms. It has become an either/or affair. Naturally, this has both weakened and frightened the more moderate forces throughout the world, and strengthened the forces on the far right. It has forced moderates to choose between alternatives, and align themselves with forces, on either the right or the left, with which they were not in sympathy. The result has been the weakening of democratic forces.

Furthermore, a foreign policy based upon these assumptions has put us in opposition to wise social change. From many sources the comment has come that the United States seems to give aid and comfort to the forces of reaction, rather than encouragement and leadership to liberal groups. This has been much more true in the Pacific area than in Europe. The result has been to strengthen immeasurably the hands of Com-

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munist propagandists, who have been more than willing to pose as the real friends of the oppressed peoples.

It is not surprising that there has been an increasing loss of confidence in the United States, and that there are wide areas where we have exhausted the reservoir of goodwill which existed at the close of the war. We cannot seem to condone the rebuilding of fascism or the continuation of feudalism, and still pose as the champion of liberty. We can understand that the revolutionary trend will pose most difficult problems for us, but any attempt on our part to prevent social change will only result in more violent upheavals. To Americans, it seems that Russia has far more responsibility for the world's ills and woes than we have, but nonetheless we shall have to accept our share of responsibility for mistakes which have come from building a policy upon assumptions that are not relevant to our day.

Such criticism obviously requires the statement of principles that will be more in accord with the facts of contemporary life, and I should like to state six which have been explicitly formulated in terms of the world we live in:

1. First, *communism and fascism must be regarded as symptoms of deep-lying social maladjustments*. One of the basic assumptions of modern psychology is that the source of aggression, whether in individuals or nations, lies always in some form of fear. Or, to put it in slightly different terms, that aggressiveness and fear are inextricably bound together: that where there is fear there will be aggressiveness, and where there is aggressiveness there will be fear, particularly if they are not brought into the open and recognized. Hate, lust for power and possession, aggressive competition, compulsive ambition—these are intimately bound up with the things that men fear. Lancelot Whyte, in his stimulating little book, *Every Man Looks Forward*, puts this position clearly: "Aggression between man and man, expressing a will to injure, is the consequence of frustration and fear."

If this is true, then we shall have to look for the roots of Russian aggression in both the psychological and social areas. There has been much written lately on the subject of Communist ideology, pointing out the Communist premise of the inevitability, not simply of revolution, but also of imperialist war against the Soviet Union, and also demonstrating the absolute nature of Russian dictatorship, with all its brutal and terrifying implications. It has been very useful to have this material, so that we can understand both the philosophy and the attitude of the Russian leaders. But it would be a mistake to let it lead us to the conviction that the problem of Russian-American relations is therefore insoluble, since war is implicit in the Russian scheme of things. The fact is that there have been times when there has been less aggressiveness on the part of the Russians than at other times. And there are certainly competent students who are insisting that the present virulence of the Russian leaders is a sign, not of strength, but of weakness; that they are facing problems that are seriously shaking their power, both domestically and internationally. On the one hand, the ravages of the war have seriously weakened their power and lowered their standard of living, to a point even below what it had been. And on the other hand, there are growing signs of restlessness in more than one of their satellite nations. To use, then, the assumption of Whyte, we may well wonder whether or not the present frightening aggressiveness on the part of Russia may not be due to very genuine fears.

We also tend to forget that the other peoples of Asia and Eastern Europe have fears —fears which are by no means always related to Russia, fears lest old feudal systems be perpetuated and fascist regimes be brought to life again, fears of continuing economic insecurity, fears lest another war will sweep across their countries. As one surveys the world today, country by country, there is no single fact which stands out so clearly as the presence of fear. Insofar as those fears can be dissipated, and conditions altered to meet them, there will be less aggressiveness on the part of various countries and less tendency to ally themselves with a belligerent Russia.

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2. *We shall have to act on the realization that thoroughgoing social change is to be the rule rather than the exception, and that frequently it will be revolutionary in character.* If the analysis of our time given previously is correct, then this is an inevitable conclusion. It is necessary that we should very promptly differentiate between two kinds of revolution. On the one hand are those inspired, directed and controlled from Moscow. Czechoslovakia is an illustration of it. That revolution did not spring indigenously from the soil of that country, nor was it a response to the demands of the people for change—it was imposed from without. But we need to recognize that there is another kind of revolution, similar to those imbedded in the Anglo-Saxon tradition—revolutions which would have occurred if Karl Marx had never been born and the Kremlin had never come into power—revolutions that are the result of age-old injustices too long endured. It is high time that we reminded ourselves that such revolutions have been respectable in our tradition—that we have recognized them as a natural and inevitable response to intolerable political oppression. John Locke, who more than any other, formulated the basis for English and American democracy, made perfectly explicit their role, and recognized that they rose as an answer to injustice.

> . . . revolutions happen not upon every little mismanagement in public affairs. Great mistakes in the ruling part, many wrong and inconvenient laws, and all the slips of human frailty will be borne by the people without mutiny or murmur. But if a long train of abuses, prevarications and artifices, all tending the same way, make the design visible to the people—and they cannot but feel what they lie under, and see whither they are going—it is not to be wondered that they should then rouse themselves and endeavour to put the rule into such hands which may secure to them the ends for which government was at first erected. . . .[6]

To remind ourselves of our tradition is to make it clear that we have never belonged in the camp of those who would oppose all social change; on the contrary, over much of our history, we have had only sympathy for men who were throwing off bonds with which we ourselves had had to struggle. To move increasingly to the right in support of reactionary governments is to betray the hopes of men who are fighting for the very thing for which we honor our ancestors. Nor is this necessarily a threat to our security. If we can accept the fact of the revolutionary nature of our era, then we can accept our role as a nation committed, not to opposing change, but to giving it such leadership and aid as lies within our power. To do so is not to increase the polarization of the world, but, on the contrary, to increase the area within which moderate solutions are possible.

3. A third assumption on which to build our foreign policy is that *peace ultimately rests back on reform, not merely on recovery*. So long as there are peoples frustrated in their demand for a better life, there will be the materials for conflict, the soil for Communist propaganda. Mr. Witherow, in the quotation referred to earlier, contemptuously dismissed as a goal for American effort "milk for every Hottentot or a T.V.A. on the Danube." What Mr. Witherow missed was the fact that until the Hottentots, and all the other peoples represented in that term, do have milk and the other necessities for life, there will be neither a stable nor a peaceful world, and until the T.V.A.'s have been built, on the Danube and on the Yangtze, there will be the kind of poverty which breeds rebellion.

We saw this fact clearly in our earlier policies for Germany and Japan. We realized that not only were we going to have to break up the power of industrialists in Germany and Japan, but that we were going to have to sponsor land reform which would give to the people a chance for a decent livelihood, and thereby avoid a repetition of the situation which had thrown the Japanese masses behind the militarists. We saw it, but we seem to have forgotten it. It is time to remind ourselves that so long as there are poverty, insecurity and fear, there will be the demand for change; that it is we who have given the oppressed peoples the hope that that change is possible,

[6] John Locke. *Treatise of Civil Government and a Letter Concerning Toleration.* New York: D. Appleton-Century, 1937, pp. 150-151.

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and that we can help them to meet it without fear to ourselves. The *San Francisco Chronicle*, in a recent editorial, phrased it tersely. ". . . the real enemy against which we have to pit our lance is not Russia, not communism, but the condition that makes communism not only possible but inevitable. The real enemy is poverty."

And that poverty, linked to the promise of a better day, which is the result to so large a degree of American technology and industry, has created the revolutions which Moscow would capitalize on. It is unnecessary, and it is stupid, to let Russia take from us the leadership in bringing the social change that we have done so much to further. Peace rests back on reform.

4. *Immediate security must not be achieved at the price of making long-range security less likely.* The reverse of this is also true: our long-range plans must not deny the possibility of present security. We have been concerned with laying a basis for achieving a lasting peace without committing ourselves to Utopian ideals—we still are determined to achieve a warless world, especially in an atomic age. Our commitments to the United Nations were made for that purpose. Collective security is obviously a long-range goal, and so is the Marshall Plan, which has been designed to remove the causes of insecurity, and thereby lessen the number of permanent spots of international infection. Other aspects of our policy have been clearly short-run. The Truman Doctrine was designed as a holding operation. It would seem that the North Atlantic Pact is of a similar temporary nature, designed to meet immediate threats. The policy of our State Department during the last three years, to give priority to European problems over the Asiatic, has been of a similar strategic character. All of these have seemed necessary, but the question we need to face is whether they have made achievement of our more distant goals difficult or impossible. On the one hand, we have these moves for military security, for strengthening the economy of possible allies and developing their military power. On the other hand, as is notably the case in Greece, the end result seems to have been to entrench the forces hostile to reform. And this, in conjunction with our primary interest in Europe, has resulted in the loss of the loyalties of the peoples of Asia for the United States. They have felt that it has been military strategy, and not principles, which have dictated our policies.

It may be time for us to inquire what, at long last, dollars and bullets do, unless they are at the service of something much more inclusive than immediate military security. Can our policy of containment of Russia be anything more than a temporary expediency which not only fails to meet the underlying causes, but even withdraws attention from them. Military security is necessary, but it deals only with immediate situations and with symptoms. Its great danger is that it will be achieved in ways which will exacerbate the underlying causes, increase the fears, and lessen the possibility of long-run peaceful solutions.

5. *The only dependable allies in the long run are free peoples, expressing their will through democratic governments.* Here again the question of time immediately emerges. Is war imminent? If it is just upon us, then clearly we will take any allies possible, no matter what their political complexion may be. But if there are some years ahead of us in which the probability of peace is high, then we may well question a policy which seems to have been based on the conviction that the enemies of Russia are necessarily the friends of the United States. No other aspect of our foreign policy has raised so many doubts. Questions of this nature have been raised, at one time or another, in regard to our relationship with the governments of Korea, China, the Philippines, Argentina, Spain, Greece, Turkey, Saudi-Arabia and Iran. We do not have a formal alliance with the Spanish government, and we have at times expressed our disapproval, but a year ago some members of Congress urged closer relations with Spain and our government's official attitude has been ambiguous at best. Yet it was the same government now in power in Spain which during the war made explicit its al-

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liance with Hitler. The United States Department of State published, in 1946, documents demonstrating the Franco-Hitler alliance. The following is characteristic:

> I consider as you yourself do that the destiny of history has united you with myself and with the Duce in an indissoluble way. . . . You must have no doubt about my absolute loyalty to this political concept and to the realization of the union of our national destinies with those of Germany and Italy. . . . I stand ready at your side, entirely and decidedly at your disposal, united in a common historical destiny, desertion from which would mean my suicide and that of the Cause which I have led and represent in Spain. I need no confirmation of my faith in the triumph of your Cause and I repeat that I shall always be a loyal follower of it. Believe me your sincere friend, with my cordial greetings,—F. Franco[7]

An even more glaring example is to be found in our policy toward China—a policy which is recognized today as bankrupt. No one has pretended that we have put between two and four billion dollars worth of aid into China since the war because of our belief in General Chiang as one who would bring security and liberty to the Chinese people. It is abundantly clear that we wanted Chiang as an ally against Russia, and that we were prepared to swallow anything he might do to the Chinese people, if only he stayed on our side of the fence. We would have done well to have remembered the point made previously—that not all revolutions are Moscow inspired; that China has been struggling for a century to have a revolution; and that not all the dollars or bullets in America can prevent the Chinese people from having the revolution they have so long desired. We should have seen the implication of the reactionary and corrupt character of the Central Government. We thought that a police state, holding its power in spite of the peoples' will, because bolstered by American aid, would make a good ally. What it did was to exhaust the reservoir of goodwill which the Chinese people have had for America for a century, turn them into bitter foes of this country, and convince the peoples of Asia that no price, in terms of principle, was too high for us to pay to get an ally. Clearly we have had a policy based neither on diplomacy nor democracy, but on short-run military strategy. This is not to deny that the Chinese Communists are Communists, or that the problem will be grave for us, but the results of our policy have only been to increase the polarization throughout the Far East, and to identify us with the maintenance of a *status quo* resented bitterly by the people. We do not seem to have learned the lesson of history that the attempt to suppress social change by the sword only makes sure that when it does at long last come, it will come by the sword.

We must remember that we are facing, not merely the threat of Russia, but also world-wide revolution. If the peoples of the world feel that because of our hostility to Russia we are going to try to prevent them from having the social change for which they have waited too long, then they will seek that change through an alliance with Russia. We have been finding our allies in the governments committed to a defense of old orders. We have allied ourselves with those forces of the *status quo* against communism, when it was precisely those very forces which had done so much to create communism in the first place.

Between 1939 and 1945, the allies sought to destroy the forces on the right. Today reports are coming thick and fast[8] to the effect that both in Germany and Japan, those same groups are coming back to power, in part permitted to do so because of the threat from the left. Do we have assurance that the Fascists have changed their stripes? In attempting to meet the threat of World War III, are we making World War IV inevitable?

6. *There must be a national commitment to democracy as an instrument of social change.* It was never meant to be used as a means for perpetuating the past. Democracy

[7] Letter from General Franco to Hitler, *El Pardo,* February 26, 1941. Published by the Department of State, United States of America. *The Spanish Government and the Axis.* Washington: U. S. Government Printing Office, March, 1946, pp. 33, 35.

[8] See, for example, "The Fiasco of Denazification in Germany," by John Herz, *Political Science Quarterly,* December, 1948; and *Japan—Enemy or Ally?,* by W. MacMahon Ball, New York: John Day, 1949.

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is the institutionalizing of the principle of change. It is the recognition of its inevitability—it is the insistence that it can take place within an orderly framework. Such a commitment would take us far from the old assumption that it is merely bad men who have been responsible for the evils of the world. It would turn our eyes again to the cure of underlying causes, rather than to the alleviation of the symptoms. There is no point in minimizing the Russian challenge, or its seriousness. None but those committed to the party line could believe that the Soviet Union has sought the ways of peace. There is an immense amount of discussion today as to the motivation for the Russian attitude. Some find it in fears built up through many years of isolation, as well as repeated invasions of the soil of Russia. Some have found it inevitable in the Communist ideology, with its insistence upon the inevitability of Capitalist imperialism, while still others have seen it as the expression of the aggressiveness of leaders corrupted by unchecked power. But whatever the motivation, we can recognize both the necessity of immediate military security, and the futility of attempting to uphold regimes that have long since lost the loyalties of their peoples. It has been American alliance with reaction, either actual or apparent, that has proved to be the most useful propaganda weapon in the Russian arsenal.

For America to commit herself to a progressive policy would mean that a high price would have to be paid by our citizens. We would do well to recognize that fact. It will involve financial sacrifice; it will also mean genuine social reform. If this is "one world," then we cannot hope to strengthen the forces of democracy abroad while we leave them weak at home. Racial injustice, gross economic inequality, and threatened civil liberties within, are dangerous threats to wise social leadership abroad. The only question is whether or not we think it worth paying this "price" to avoid another world war, a war which will be fought with atomic weapons.

There is a cry of human despair, rising from the hearts of men and women the world over, who too long have endured poverty, injustice, fear and tragedy. And they will have no more of it. The question for us today is whether or not we will accept the leadership in changing that world, even though part of the price is the facing of our own internal tensions. The separation between the domestic and the international is an artificial one, and what we do within the borders of our own country is an integral part of what we are to accomplish abroad. The Communists have an uncanny ability for showing up the less attractive side of our civilization, and for making communism appear as a far more desirable alternative. As Toynbee has recently said, it is this very fact which makes it clear that the challenge that Russia presents to us comes ultimately from ourselves. Our Western culture and skill have united the world; they have also created bitter tensions between those who have benefited and those who have not. The unequal distribution of goods, not only in foreign lands, but in the United States, has been transformed by the technological advance of modern times from an undesirable misfortune to an intolerable injustice.

This poses a unique problem to the United States, particularly in its relationships with other nations. We do not in this country live in a class society; it would be much more accurate to say that we are a nation of middle-class people—but the implications of that may be ominous. There is a danger that as a *country* we may follow the policy of the middle class in Europe, and in international dealings, speaking as a middle-class nation, throw our weight toward the protection of the *status quo*. That was the reaction of the middle class of Europe to its domestic policies. That may be the reaction of the United States in its foreign relations. We may well become the ally of reaction everywhere, not merely because we fear Russia, but because we are determined to protect our property and privilege and power. If that happens, we will see the end of democracy at home; the polarization into the far right and left; and the world, or what is left of it, will belong to the Communists and the Fascists. To accept the fact that change at home is necessary is not in

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any sense to deny the essential elements of the American tradition. Rather, it is an affirmation of the things in which we have most strongly believed, for certainly democracy was never designed as an instrument for maintaining a *status quo*. It was rather a means by which social change could come wisely and peacefully. "In the strength of our forefathers we go, not in their tracks; their stars we follow, not their dead campfires."

Two years ago Secretary Stimson summarized our real problem when he said that our central task in dealing with Russia was to demonstrate that freedom and prosperity could be sustained in the Western democratic world:

> The problem of Russia is thus reduced to a question of our own fitness to survive. I do not mean to belittle the Communist challenge. I only mean that the essential question is one which we should have to answer if there were not a Communist alive. Can we make freedom and prosperity real in the present world? If we can, communism is no threat. If not, with or without communism, our own civilization would ultimately fail.[9]

We seem to feel that we are at a serious disadvantage in any conflict, ideological or otherwise, with Russia, and that democracy perishes when it is confronted with the menace of communism. But democracy is not a fragile flower to be protected, nor even a shield to crouch behind; it is a sword, stronger and sharper than any forged in the arsenals of the dictators. Insofar as it is based on justice and rooted in the loyalty of the people, it is invincible. Democracy is something to fight *for:* democracy is also something to fight *with*.

[9] Henry L. Stimson. "The Challenge to America," *Foreign Affairs*, October, 1947.

In the Winter Number . . .

The AMERICAN SCHOLAR FORUM will be devoted to a discussion of how much fruitful use American women have made of the securing of such privileges as the ballot, higher education, and other equal rights for which they fought so valiantly throughout the early part of the century. The contributors will be Worth Tuttle Hedden and Agnes Rogers.

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The Reader Replies . . .

The Reader Replies *regularly carries comments by readers on the contents of the preceding American Scholar Forum. In the Winter number, for example,* The Reader Replies *will contain letters about the article in the current number on the subject: "American Foreign Policy and Its Consequences." In addition, miscellaneous letters of comment on various articles appear in this department. All communications should be addressed to: The Editor,* The American Scholar, *415 First Avenue, New York 10, N. Y., and should not exceed 300 words in length, except for comments on the previous Forum, which may run to 500. Because of limitations of space, the editors cannot guarantee to print all communications received. Letters intended for publication in the Winter number should be mailed before October 10. (Editor)*

COMMUNISM AND ACADEMIC FREEDOM

Assumptions from Fears

The discussion of the University of Washington case in the Summer issue of The American Scholar casts grave doubt on the efficacy of human reason. For here a group of thinkers—philosophers, scientists, scholars—in the presence of the same body of factual data, arrive at diametrically opposed interpretations of these data. Obviously, the only possible explanation is that their arguments rest, not on the data, but on a set of assumptions which are prior to the data.

I see no alternative to the conclusion that these basic assumptions are derived from the particular fears which dominate each one of the contributors. I shall not venture to identify their fears, but I will try to identify my own.

Communism is a threat to the American type of democracy; it would destroy free enterprise and free thought. But fascism is also a threat to my political and intellectual freedom. Which do I fear most?

The question can be answered only in terms of the immediacy of the danger. To me the possibility that a tiny group of Communist conspirators will seize the government, or that Communist propagandists will win the support of the average American—including American students—is so remote that it stirs no terror in my mind. My faith in America is too strong. But the type of invasion of intellectual freedom, illustrated by the methods of the various Committees on Un-American Activities, is a real and present danger.

Against that threat I must defend myself, since the freedom of my mind is my most precious possession. And defending my own freedom, I must defend the freedom of thought and speech of all men, even of those who, if they won the power, would deny me freedom. If our kind of American democracy is to win the war of ideas, it

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must be consistent with its fundamental tenets, and not resort to the devices of intimidation and repression that are characteristic of totalitarian societies.

My prejudices, then, reflections of my particular fear, lead me to the same conclusions as those of the majority of the Faculty Committee at the University of Washington.

Hayward Keniston
Ann Arbor, Michigan

Care and Patience

I HOLD with those of your contributors who regard it as preposterous for people to claim the benefit of rights which they avow their intention of destroying if they ever get the chance, and it seems to me that their proved commitments and past activities serve to put American Communists in that class. Expulsion of Communists from the teaching staffs of American colleges is, nevertheless, something that can hardly be effected without some impairment to certain important values, and especially to the confidence felt by their students in the intellectual freedom of their teachers. Those who have the responsibility for acting in situations like that which arose at the University of Washington need, for this reason, to proceed with care and patience. At the same time, the difficulty of their position merits sympathy, too.

As for the Communists, they would do well to recall what happened to the Loyalists in the Revolution, when the groundwork of our constitutional rights was laid, and to the Copperheads in the Civil War, when those rights were extended to a previously enslaved population.

Edward S. Corwin
Princeton, New Jersey

The Central Issue

THREE SCHOLARS of acknowledged competence have been dismissed from the University of Washington. They were dismissed not for what they taught—that was not called into question—but for their activities as citizens in our democracy. Two are members of the Communist Party; the other was deemed "evasive" in responding to questions concerning his relationship to Communists and was, one judges, "uncooperative" in the effort of the Administration to identify him with that heresy.

The record, ably summarized in THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR, indicates that all three received a formal hearing. Nor can one doubt that President Allen and his Regents believe that they acted in the national interest. Yet as one reads Helen Lynd's moving portrayal of the forces underlying the decision, the conclusion cannot be escaped that in the years to come the scholarly world will have reason to be ashamed of this action—ashamed that the University of Washington has thus fallen victim to the prevalent national hysteria.

Some months ago, four hundred and thirty educators including A. J. Carlson, Kirtley Mather, Ernest R. Hilgard, Zechariah Chafee, Jr., W. E. Hocking, Ray A. Billington and A. B. Wolfe, addressed a letter to the Board of Regents on behalf of one of the defendants. This communication, although written on behalf of Professor Gundlach, points forcefully to the central issue in all the cases:

> . . . . Independence of thought and inquiry, the very essence of free and democratic education, cannot exist in an atmosphere of fear and repression such as results from ill-conducted legislative inquiries into alleged radicalism in universities. America has more to fear from compulsory conformity than it has to fear from the competition of dissenting ideas, however militant or unpopular they may be. To place a premium upon silence or upon avoidance of controversial issues negates the very purpose of education, which is not to shelter the student from significant economic and political philosophies but to expose him freely to all.
>
> For the past twenty years Professor Gundlach has been a member of the Department of Psychology at the University of Washington. During that period he has not only been an esteemed scholar but has also participated actively in civic life. We can well understand his objection to legislative intrusion into his political beliefs, especially in view of the procedural conduct of the hearings and the introduction of the doctrine of guilt by association. We contend that the issue at stake cannot be Professor Gundlach's economic and political ideas but rather must be that of whether the University of Washington is to take the un-

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UNDER WHATEVER SKY

Irwin Edman

"To the Layman—"

"To the layman—" How often the phrase has put us in our place, all of us! For there are very few of us who are not laymen, about anything except a small specialty. Sometimes we are called the general public, or the general reader, or the common man. But whatever the name given us, it is meant as a condescension. The layman is the one for whom technicalities are translated, who judges ineptly as far as he can judge at all in matters vastly beyond his comprehension. The layman may be a lawyer, doctor, engineer, Sanskrit scholar, or expert on Etruscan inscriptions. But he is a layman all the same, about everything that lies outside of engineering, medicine, Sanskrit or Etruscan.

Well, we are all laymen together, absurdly and humiliatingly innocent of everything but our own narrow specialities. It rather sets one up, as a matter of fact, to think that with respect to the incidence of taxation, Einstein knows not a whit more than one does oneself, and that André Gide is as ignorant as you or I on the present state of cancer research—that the Pope himself is only infallible in questions of faith and morals, but likely to make mistakes in English, or in subtraction, or in the understanding of nuclear fission. It sets one up to think that ultimately all questions of public policy are addressed to each of us in his capacity of layman.

It is we laymen who ultimately have to understand the world and get the hang of it. Without us (for we are the vast majority) ultimate decisions cannot be made or carried out. It is we who meet at dinner parties and in buses, who sit next to each other on trains and planes, and wait in queues for tickets at box offices.

To paraphrase Lincoln, God must have loved laymen, he made so many of us. It is not the poets, as the Irish poet O'Shaughnessy suggested, but we laymen who are "the movers and shakers of the world forever it seems." Perhaps it is our slow inability to understand too easily and too much that keeps the world from being moved about too rapidly or too drastically. Compared with us, experts seem, except in trivial matters, ignorant, and specialists extremely narrow.

Goethe—Mephistopheles Speaking

By the time these lines appear, the Goethe celebrations will have quieted down a little, all the speeches will have been made, all the anthologies published, and all the lessons drawn for our time from Goethe's wisdom. The mountains of Colorado will cease to resound with praises of that great Germanic Greek, that great First European, that great lover, that great romantic, that comprehensive sage.

It is not to be expected that we should feel at home equally with all the Olympians. One is entitled to one's choices. One is also entitled to one's allergies. Goethe, or the Goethe legend, has for a long time now been one of mine. There is a Mephistopheles in all of us—not simply in *Faust*—and I find the denying devil in me active about Goethe. A curious kind of stuffiness has, for me, come to be associated with his name, despite the exquisite lyrics, the moving quality of parts of *Faust*, the perceptiveness of *Poetry and Truth*. But, insofar as I have discovered a philosophy in Goethe, I have not liked it. It has always seemed to me adolescent, promoted out of all conscience into a grandiose *Weltanschauung*. Experience, experience! And nothing to be learned from any of it, save that there is to be a new experience that will transcend anything yet experienced. Then, too, Goethe was so infuriatingly successful—as lover, as sage, as literary dictator.

It was a great pleasure to me to discover

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in a volume of Goethe's miscellaneous writings, a letter he wrote in English largely for the exercise at the age of sixteen. It is comforting to think that at sixteen one could have done no worse in German. That letter gave another dimension to Goethe, humor, but the humor was not intended. Goethe puts me in the mood for Heine. I can hardly wait for an anniversary of Heine. The Goethe year, God be praised, is nearly over. "*Ueber allen Gipfeln ist Ruh*" even in Aspen, Colorado, where Goethe's praises have been sung by a whole bevy of contemporary eminences. How lovely is the silence. "*Verweile doch! du bist so schoen.*" That's what a year-long celebration does for one. It creates an antibody of feeling against the very hero it was designed to celebrate.

Conversation Piece

A wire recorder is surely one of the most bemusing gadgets to enter the home of modern man. It is, for one thing, a mildly malicious plaything. It is an irrestistible temptation to have a group of friends engage in conversation, on some high or some mighty theme, and a few moments later play back to them the exact record of their comments, with all the uh's and ah's, all the dogmatisms and solecisms, all the casual revelations of prejudice, the nonsequiturs and banality left in. If it be said that this is not quite playing fair, the answer is that the one playing the trick is himself included in any such recording, and his defects are played back as ruthlessly as those of his victims. Even when a friend knows he is being recorded, the results are always, in one respect at least, surprising. To no one, of course, does his own voice ever sound like himself. It is always pitched too high or too low, it is always too husky or too shrill, too rough or too smooth. Everyone else's voice sounds perfectly natural.

What is most amazing to those who listen is what a conversation sounds like a few minutes after it has been held. How many sentences only barely get started, how few ever come to a coherent end! How many crosscurrents of themes and ideas! Yet how many motifs crop up with a certain symmetry, so that even the most random conversation has an unexpected loose order and progression of its own. But how dull an epigram sounds a second time, how outrageous and flat a repeated and expected pun! How glad everyone is to be informed that the recorded conversation can be promptly and completely "erased" by some magical-seeming magnetic rearranging of molecules. It is a relief to everyone to know that the recorder is turned off, and that one's shafts and sallies, one's ragged grammar and wretched bleatings, have no more certain immortality than the vanishing memories of those present. And, one reflects, what a blessing it is that even the most naturalistic novelist does not record quite what people say. What a bore literature would be were it as faithful as a wire recorder!

And Gladly Serve

It is the natural expectation of anyone called to serve on a jury that he will be asked to serve in a case involving, at the very least, treason. A murder case would, of course, be delightful, if it were not that one might have to, in voting guilty, be a party to meting out capital punishment. The luck of nearly everyone I know has been to be a juror in a petty civil action involving no great sums and no great issues. Well, no great sums, but I could not help noting, somewhat awed, as the small arguments over the small action developed, as the piddling testimony progressed, that there *were* great issues involved, all the principles of morality, of law and of justice. I could feel in the close attentiveness of my fellow jurors that they thought so too.

And what an education in nice distinctions we were having—between the relevant and the irrelevant, between points of fact and points of law, between what was the recounting of a fact and the retailing of an opinion on the part of a witness. How fine it is, I keep secretly murmuring to myself, that in the Anglo-Saxon tradition, a group of ordinary citizens like us here in the box are called upon to decide a case involving these nice points and these ulti-

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mate values. How nobly and clearly the conscientious judge instructs us, helps us see what is material and what is immaterial. How well-protected is everything and everybody. For two days we followed the case closely; all of us carefully followed the judge's instructions not to discuss the case with our fellow jurors nor with anyone else during the recess. At the end of two days we were all ready conscientiously to decide the issue, and the thin-lipped lady, who had often served on juries before, was obviously going to take her line, whatever it was, and hold to it. The case involved alleged fraud, and it would be wonderful to have a chance to ask the judge to define what was faith, what was fraud, in this world. I began to feel as if I were one of Socrates' jurors deciding on the fate, not of thirty-six hundred dollars, but of life and death itself, the life and death of justice.

It was somewhat of an anticlimax to have the judge decide after a half-hour's private consultation with the lawyers on both sides that the thing indicated was a directed verdict, which the foreman of the jury repeated after the judge. It was a bitter pill not to have a chance to decide what was right and wrong, and yet rather a relief. It is difficult enough in one's own life to have to decide for oneself. The jury system is all very well, I reflected, and a fine democratic institution, but how convenient to have official omniscience to turn to, how relaxing to turn to a certified judge for judgment.

Fellow Traveler—Old Meaning

It is now almost impossible to use the word "fellow travelers" in its older and face sense. There was a time, only yesterday, that the epithet conjured up tablemates on a ship, companions in a club car, seat-mates in a bus in Devon or Colorado. Fellow travelers, almost by definition, were amiable or, at any rate, picturesque. They were, say, passengers in the compartment in an Irish train, full of voluble friendliness. They were the young soldiers just back from Guam, or en route to Texas, beside one in the smoking car. To think of oneself as a fellow traveler was not to think of oneself as an innocent or sinister conniver at revolution, as a liberal who, knowing or unknowing, was a Communist front.

In the traditional sense, a fellow traveler might be anything professionally. But for the time, both you and he stood to each other only in the relation of the passengers on the same vehicle, riders to the same destination, or to destinations on the same road. Thus one recalls years later how one shared a cabin on a steamer with a missionary en route to Africa, an engineer on his way to Siam. But for the time being, one shared the same meals and the same storms, and the same little cosmos of other passengers, on deck and in the lounge.

Fellow traveling used to be half the fun of travel. But as many have observed, it is curiously lacking in air travel. Passengers are strangely uncommunicative in an airplane. Partly, it is that conversation is limited to one's neighbor. But, also, most passengers regard an airplane as simply a speedy way of getting there, a fast box to be transported in. The sooner it is over, the better. The very time one spends in the plane is begrudged. As well get into a long conversation with strangers in an elevator in Rockefeller Center as to talk to a neighbor in a plane.

But there is, I think, a subtler reason for silence aloft. Even those who are not frightened in planes feel it is really an unwonted place for people to be. The earthbound human feels it abnormal to be in the air. Insecurity and transitoriness explain why plane passengers are so psychologically isolated, each from the others. Each man is an airborne island. For the fellowship of travel is impossible at three hundred miles an hour and in the stratosphere. "Fellow traveler" might as well be given over to grim political uses. In an air age one travels alone.

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The Revolving Bookstand

Roosevelt—the Myths and the Man

William Harlan Hale

The Roosevelt I Knew, by Frances Perkins. New York: Viking Press. 1946. $3.75.
On Active Service in Peace and War, by Henry L. Stimson and McGeorge Bunday. New York: Harper & Brothers. 1948. $5.00.
The Memoirs of Cordell Hull. New York: The Macmillan Company. 1948. $11.
Jim Farley's Story: The Roosevelt Years, by James A. Farley. New York: Whittlesey House. 1948. $3.50.
President Roosevelt and the Coming of the War, 1941, by Charles A. Beard. New Haven: Yale University Press. 1948. $5.00.
The Roosevelt Myth, by John T. Flynn. New York: Devin-Adair. 1948. $3.50.
Roosevelt and Hopkins: An Intimate History, by Robert E. Sherwood. New York: Harper & Brothers. 1948. $6.

A FEW HEROES, like Wellington, become legends in their lifetime; but most of them must wait until they themselves and the whole generation they moved in have sunk into the twilit realm of recollection. The question now is, is the rate of this process changing? With all our sure communications and our facilities for keeping the record straight, are we slowing down the conversion of great men into myths—or are we speeding it up?

The slow, cumulative action of word-of-mouth transmission, crackerbarrel hearsay, story and song, was supposed to create the substance of imaginary images, while the modern observer's and historian's printed word, by setting forth the facts, is supposed to restrain them and substitute hard realism. Maybe so. But in the case of Franklin D. Roosevelt, the more that is written about him—and written in order to get in there with the truth before the next man does so—the more we find the late President taking on the attributes of a misty ancestral presence, sometimes as deity and sometimes as devil, and this within only five years of the time he left us.

Myths After Lincoln is the title of one of the late Lloyd Lewis' distinguished books. But those myths were long in the making. Possibly that had something to do with the fact that so few of the close associates of Lincoln's presidential years ever got around to writing—or at all events to publishing—their version of what had happened. Secretary Chase and Attorney-General Bates did keep fragmentary diaries, but neither of them was published until long after their deaths; Gideon Welles' massive record did not see print until 1909; and even John Hay's and Herndon's first-hand studies were delayed until the eve of the 1890's.

But when we come to Franklin Roosevelt, we find that almost all his chief cabinet members and close associates have already spoken—Hull, Stimson, Perkins, Farley, Hopkins and Byrnes in books, and Morgenthau, Ickes, Stettinius, Garner, Bullitt and others in sequences of articles, some of which add up to book length. His own family has gone on record, too—most conspicuously in Eleanor Roosevelt's candid portrait (imagine Mary Todd Lincoln recounting in detail her life with her husband!)—and the only major political ally of the period to remain reticent is Henry A. Wallace, whose feelings about the Roosevelt of later years are known to have been ambivalent.

Historical urgency, no doubt, has impelled these fellow-actors on the scene to

✪ Author of *The March of Freedom: A Layman's History of the American People* and other books, WILLIAM HARLAN HALE writes for magazines on current political topics and is at present completing a biography of Horace Greeley.

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Courts on Trial

MYTH AND REALITY IN AMERICAN JUSTICE

By JEROME FRANK. One of the most stimulating of modern writers on the American judicial system offers his excitingly controversial views on judges, juries, lawyers, and "court-house government" as it actually exists. A vigorous exposition of how the judicial system sometimes obstructs the justice it seeks to assure, and how greater justice can be achieved. Intellectual richness is the hallmark of this book, for the author draws upon his wide learning in many fields to make this a volume not only for the legal profession but, perhaps even more importantly, one for the layman.

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The Idea of a Theater

By FRANCIS FERGUSSON. An original and beautifully written book on changing perspectives in the art of the theater. Through a study of nine plays—*Oedipus Rex, Bérénice, Tristan and Isolde, Hamlet, Ghosts, The Cherry Orchard, Six Characters in Search of an Author, Noah, Murder in the Cathedral*—the author shows how all playwrights seek to "hold the mirror up to nature", and how in this respect the art of drama is always the same, varying only with the aesthetic and philosophic concepts of each age.

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THE REINTERPRETATION OF

Victorian Literature

Edited by JOSEPH E. BAKER. A lively reappraisal of Victorian contributions to our culture, editorially sponsored by the *Modern Language Association.* The authors reconsider some of the common modern opinions about the Victorians—their alleged priggishness, dogmatism, and imperialism, and bring the Victorian era into clearer focus as the age when writers first tried to adapt humane culture to a new world of science, industrialism, and democracy.

November, $3.75

AT YOUR BOOKSTORE, Princeton *University Press, PRINCETON, N. J.*

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want to set the record straight. But in some cases an additional impetus may have appeared in the prospect of book-club and popular-magazine rewards far exceeding anything dreamed of in Lincoln's day. As a result, a social scientist might find grounds here for drawing a correlation between the growth of mass media and the speed of memoir-writing—and thereby of the myth-making process in general.

Not that any of these authors of memoirs, friendly or unfriendly, have actually striven to distort the Roosevelt story. They have simply looked at it, as was inevitable, from so many different angles and the points of view of such dissimilar temperaments and experiences that the sum total of what they saw in Roosevelt gleams with the refractions of disagreements, enigmas and contradictions. The rifts are the sharper because, as Robert E. Sherwood has remarked, most of Roosevelt's appointments to the Cabinet and the various New Deal and War Agencies "were peculiarly violent, quarrelsome, recalcitrant men." Furthermore a school of polemical writers intent on running down the Roosevelt record in entirety has established itself on the fringe of those possessing first-hand knowledge—with the result that today the literature on Roosevelt already bulks up into a broad shelf whose exercises in denigration at one end are matched by sagas of devotion at the other.

Many of the authors follow classic patterns in writing of the man who so shaped their destiny; a few, however, are of an order that is virtually unique. In the former group we have, first in point of publication, the lifelong friend whose affection and sensitiveness have led her to write a chronicle that is by turns candid and reticent—Frances Perkins. Next we have the elder statesman, renowned in his own right, and able to portray the younger chief of his own later years with untroubled objectivity—Henry Stimson. Then we have the political manager, first enjoying the game of enthroning his candidate and then growing increasingly frustrated over his own failure to keep pace with him, intellectually or politically—"Sunny Jim" Farley. After that comes the conservative political ally, in whom the dignity of high office tended to breed suspicion, pomposity and increasing jealousy of his chief—Cordell Hull. Next, dropping down several levels, we have the angry historian, so fallen out with his one-time friend over the conduct of foreign policy as to bend all his own final energies toward wrecking that man's reputation in general—Charles A. Beard. And finally, dropping down many levels more, we have the choleric publicist, writing for the eyes of the irreconcilables of the carriage trade a raucous hymn of hate—John T. Flynn.

Such responses, with their range of character and feeling, were to be expected—although perhaps few people had thought that the aging Secretary Stimson (with young McGeorge Bundy at his side) would write so vigorous and eloquent a book, or the crusty Secretary Hull such a dull one. On the other hand, there is complete historical novelty both in Mrs. Roosevelt's recently serialized family chronicle, whose searching insights into her husband's nature belie its outward air of garrulity, and in the playwright Robert Sherwood's extraordinary performance at weaving together, out of an intimate knowledge of the close friends, Roosevelt and Harry Hopkins, and their multitude of interchanges, a dual portrait that illumines each man through the other.

It is as if in an earlier generation a young Eugene O'Neill, say, had become both the helper of President Wilson and the confidant of Colonel House, and thus had been able to fix with dramatic authenticity a relationship that in its time was crucial to the whole world. But if an O'Neill might have suited the tragic temper of that particular White House outcome, we were distinctly lucky in that the dramatist who found the door of the war president of our own day open to him was also an apostle of the comic spirit—and thus a man uniquely fitted to record the paradoxes, high spirits and ebullience of the second Roosevelt and his entourage, no less than their somber undertones.

A first reading of Sherwood's massive handling of the Hopkins story, and its

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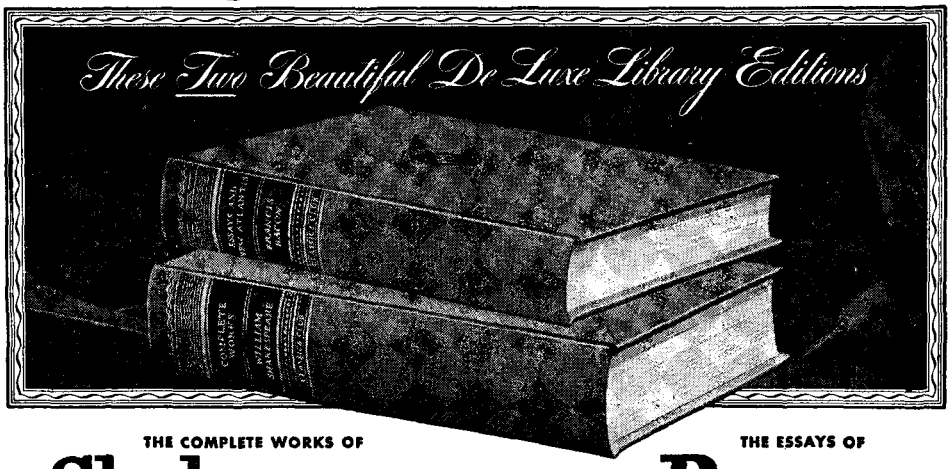

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ties with Roosevelt, left me with the feeling that it was almost too massive, and that amid the lengthy documents and accounts of White House minutiae which swell its 950 pages, the dramatist sometimes had lost out to the stenographic recorder. But a second reading, undertaken especially in the light of the continuing outpourings on Roosevelt from other sources, convinced me that this length and amplitude were high advantages. For everything else was fragmentary; almost everything else, apart from Stimson's statesmanlike account, was contentious; in Frances Perkins' telling of the story, the man sometimes seemed too beatific, while in Farley's he became too sinister; and Hull, writing to an even greater length than Sherwood, seemed intent chiefly on proving how much wiser he had been all along than his boss. Here in the Sherwood-Hopkins book, at least, was a detailed, day-by-day effort to tell the story of how Roosevelt acted upon his immediate environment and it upon him—a partisan effort, to be sure, and by no means to be classed as a formal historical study, but nevertheless a central source-book that would help prevent the growing mythology for and against Roosevelt from getting quite out of hand.

The theme of contradiction, which underlies so much of the Roosevelt literature, is present also in Sherwood's book; the difference is that Sherwood tries to do something about solving it. Henry Morgenthau once confessed himself simply baffled by the President's "bewildering complexity of moods and motives." Frances Perkins writes of the "conflict within him"—between, for instance, his "stern, puritan conscience" and his being "the easy-going, indulgent friend of the irregulars"—and concludes that "he was the most complicated human being I ever knew." Stimson, a Hamiltonian who liked strong government (although not anything that smacked of central planning) grew to admire Roosevelt for his leadership, but he also accuses him of being "indecisive" and "the poorest administrator I have ever worked under," and remarks of the President's handling of the 1941 crisis with Germany that "T.R. would have done a better and more clean-cut job."

Hull, for his part, mutters that in spite of his attachment as a Southern Democrat to Roosevelt, he saw in the President chiefly an "extreme liberal" who was surrounded by "semi-radicals" in a White House whose atmosphere apparently made the Secretary of State wish himself back in the Tennessee hills. Priding himself on having made the fewest possible changes in the moss-grown Department of State when he took it over, he nevertheless voices anguish at the inevitable consequence—namely Roosevelt's repeated circumvention of the Department in crucial matters, and his reliance on personal emissaries—and thus unwittingly raises the question of why Roosevelt, a strong leader who liked strong men about him, let Hull stay on so long.

In Farley's view, meanwhile, the President whom he had helped elevate was "at heart a boy, sometimes a spoiled boy"—but a boy Machiavellian enough to keep himself in the White House until he was tired and sick, whereas in 1940 the succession should obviously have gone to Farley himself, or at least to Jack Garner. And finally, in the view of the historian Beard and the prosecutor Flynn, Roosevelt was simply a fakir who, escaping from his mounting troubles at home, tricked his people into a war abroad—a war which, strangely enough, they embarked on as a crusade.

The man whom Flynn draws is obviously sub-human—an historical devil without morals, thoughts or even ability, and whose every personal association was dishonest and corrupt, even down to his grandfather's and his sons' ways of earning a living. Beard, at least, is willing to grant him some ability, in recounting the sly steps by which Roosevelt supposedly provoked a harmless Germany and Japan to war. (In November, 1941, Beard declares in a scandalized tone, "Roosevelt and Hull categorically rejected a Japanese proposal for a *modus vivendi*"—without bothering to recall just what the terms of that particular Tokyo squeeze-play were, and suggesting that the mere rejection of anything coming

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from Japan was *prima facie* evidence of evil design.)

Farley's man Roosevelt, meanwhile, seems less and less credible the longer one looks at him. For how could a politician who was so much the creation of Farley have managed to survive so long and so effectively in political command after Farley, the master-builder, had turned all his powers against him? Hull's Roosevelt, too, becomes incommensurable: we learn he was an international amateur, a dilettante at diplomacy whenever he failed to follow Hull's sage advice—which leaves us wondering just what force prompted Roosevelt's sure vision of the United Nations or his victorious doctrine of lend-lease. To Frances Perkins' aureoled Roosevelt, on the other hand, almost all things were possible. But it is the special virtue of Sherwood's Roosevelt, as seen through the sharp eyes of Hopkins (who himself, as Joseph Davies put it, embodied "the purity of St. Francis combined with the sharp shrewdness of a race-track tout"), that he reveals just what was possible and what was not.

The character of the President, Sherwood sums up, "was not only multiplex, it was contradictory to a bewildering degree. He was hard and he was soft. . . . He could be a ruthless politician, but he was the champion of friends and associates who for him were political liabilities, and of causes which . . . advisers assured him would constitute political suicide. He could appear to be utterly cynical, worldly, illusionless, and yet his religious faith was the strongest and most mysterious force that was in him." Much of this is what other men have said or worried about; but then Sherwood goes on to write, "Probably the supreme contradiction in Roosevelt's character was the fact that, with all his complexity, he achieved a grand simplicity which will make him, I believe, much less of a mystery to biographers than Lincoln was and must forever remain."

Whatever the complex forces that impelled him, in short, the result was readily understandable to his countrymen and to the world at large—more understandable to them, apparently, than to many who have written officiously about him. There were more clear highlights in him than in Lincoln; there were fewer darks and grays and ruminant shadows. He dazzled his people; he seems to have blinded many of his commentators. He surprised men—and still does surprise them, when they think both of his personal fate and the fate of the world he had to deal with—with his buoyancy, his resilience, his air of happy improvisation. This has both bemused the public and confounded the historians: for his problems were never as simple as those faced, for instance, by his bumptious namesake Theodore, and his responses were often more difficult than those made by his two great tragic predecessors, Woodrow Wilson and Lincoln.

Lincoln, during 1861-63 at least, settled on one war aim: to restore the Union and let the slavery issue be subordinate. Wilson, in 1917-20, settled on one aim too: to win a crusade abroad, even at the expense of letting reaction and darkening counsel take hold at home. But the second Roosevelt, throughout his final crucial years, was faced with having to achieve two aims simultaneously—those of establishing a liberal, internationalist coalition at home and an unprecedented fighting coalition abroad.

The heaviest criticisms that have descended upon him may be due in part to this very spread of aims and the inevitable compromises and improvisations to which he had to resort in order to fulfill them. Even in Sherwood's account, the vote-seeking excursions of Roosevelt's 1940 presidential campaign ("I shall say it again and again and again: your boys are not going to be sent into any foreign wars") leave an uncomfortable taste. But Roosevelt himself was the most uncomfortable of all: at a moment when the overriding impact of military disaster in France made his renomination inevitable, he had to begin preparing his reluctant liberal supporters for the possibility of war, while at the same time trying to make sure that all conservatives would not turn isolationist simply out of hatred for him.

His most daring decisions had to be his loneliest ones: the move to pour our own

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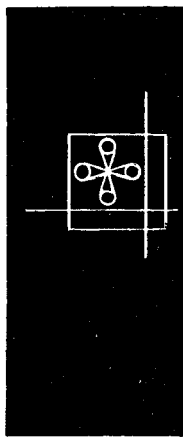

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scanty arms into a desperate Britain in 1940, the startling invention of lend-lease, and those wartime arrangements with Soviet Russia which men as different as Sherwood and Stimson—both fully appreciating how the Kremlin later betrayed them—agree in regarding as diplomacy vital to their time. If the obloquy of history is to descend on such moves as these, it descends also on the vast majorities who gave support to them and took heart from them. So the attempt to write off Roosevelt—and quickly—is an uneasy one at best; and it may be significant that the magazine *Life*, itself in the past no small contributor to the barrage against the late President, has taken to printing sentimental snapshots of the man as he was in his youth, with captions calculated to enlarge the legend of his rise and his still unsettled deeds.

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THE READER REPLIES

(Continued from page 486)

precedented responsibility of going beyond a teacher's record of competent performance to establish a standard of political orthodoxy. If that is done in this case, the next step may be to decide whether those showing evidence of a belief in Catholicism or the single tax are acceptable. Both of these are doctrines of considerable rigidity. Both have been at times highly unpopular. The University is vaulted into the unenviable position of approving the radius of acceptable ideas and, by implication therefore, will be forced to determine the ever-changing borderline of orthodoxy. We do not think you will wish to undertake such a responsibility. . . .

The American Association of University Professors will in due course render its verdict in these cases. That verdict will not unfortunately provide for the support of the families of those rendered jobless because they had the courage of their convictions. Educators should not only reflect on the meaning to free education of the Washington cases, but should take steps to build a fund which will support these victims of our contemporary intolerance.

Colston E. Warne
Amherst, Massachusetts

Legitimate Principles

My own thinking on the issue of Communists on university faculties in general and the Washington case in particular runs along the lines well set forth by Professor Lovejoy. My position can be summarized somewhat as follows:

The right to be a Communist, to belong to the Communist Party, and to advocate its doctrines in our democracy is one thing. The right to teach in schools or colleges is another, and involves different considerations:

Academic freedom is essential in democracy and to sound educational policy, and no convinced Communist can believe in or practice academic freedom. He is bound by his party, as no other organization has ever bound its adherents, to accept the dicta of the party authorities on every subject on which the party speaks. He is also taught that deceit in the service of the

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party is honorable. Evidence on this point is overwhelming. I could add testimony out of my own experience in years of relationships with Communists.

Despite all this, I think it might be permissible to allow a Communist to teach at the university level since communism is a factor in our modern world, and discussion of it is important—provided that (1) the professor should openly avow his communism; and (2) that he should be competent in a field in which as yet the party has not laid down its line as it has, not only in the social sciences, but in biology and the arts.

The fact that these legitimate principles may be abused by reactionaries does not refute them. It merely means that true lovers of liberty must be very vigilant. On the whole, I think that faculties would be the best judges of the performance of their members. This is a position that has been taken by Professor Sidney Hook.

Norman Thomas
39A Gramercy Park
New York 10, N. Y.

Truth by Fiat

THREE CENTURIES ago Galileo under clerical pressure recanted this heretical belief that the earth revolved.

In our century the Fundamentalists abolished biological evolution in Tennessee. In Rhode Island a newspaper editor was excommunicated for insisting on his right to differ with his bishop. A regent of the University of Texas tried to protect the student mind from contact with Dos Passos' *U.S.A.*

Today, on orders from the Kremlin, Soviet science has discarded Mendelianism. Franco's minister of Labor announces that failure to support the Fascist regime is treason. Hungary and Bulgaria chant the same words to a Russian tune. The threat of hell-fire has been used in Italy to hold the voters in line, and now in America a group of ecclesiastics are reported to have pronounced that separation of church and state is "a shibboleth of doctrinaire secularism."

The President of the University of Washington declares, "A Communist is incapable of teaching the truth."

"What is truth?" asked Pontius Pilate. The question should ensure him not damnation, but entrance to whatever heaven would be tolerable for the enfranchised soul. Authoritarian truth will win only Pyrrhic victories as long as the human spirit cherishes the eternal spark of heresy. Heresy survived the burning of the early Christians in Rome and the burning of John Hus in Bohemia. It survived the gas chambers of Poland and will survive the salt mines of Siberia. In the capacity for heresy lies the best hope for the future of the human race.

Fiat truth is worth about as much as fiat money. It is as dangerous to base our intellectual and moral economy on the one, as our business economy on the other. Shakespeare, as usual, had some words for it, spoken by Ulysses in his famous discourse on order. ("Order" to him was contrasted with violent revolution, and hence was not wholly unlike our conception of orderly change or "liberty under law"). Without order, he said,

> Force should be right; or rather, right and wrong,
> Between whose endless jar justice resides,
> Should lose their names, and so should justice too.

Only the constant challenge of conflicting concepts of "right" and "wrong" holds out any hope of that justice which is our approximation to a never attainable absolute of truth. Without it, democracy too will "lose its name."

William T. Hastings
Providence, R. I.

Guilt by Association

I BELIEVE that the definitive answer to all those who maintained in your Forum on communism and academic freedom that membership in the Communist Party should be penalized by exclusion from the teaching profession was given by Lord Macaulay more than a century ago. I presume that when I quote from Lord Macaulay's remarks concerning Queen Elizabeth's action against the Catholics in England in the six-

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teenth century, I am addressing myself to persons who, like Lord Macaulay (and myself) stand opposed to any form of totalitarianism and who, like myself, believe that communism is a totalitarian form of government. On this presumption, I hope that Lord Macaulay's argument, which is essentially an argument against the doctrine of "guilt by association," will seem as irresistible to those to whom this letter is directed as it seems to me.

I quote from Lord Macaulay's essay on Hallam's "Constitutional History," written in 1828.

> To punish a man because he has committed a crime, or because he is believed, though unjustly, to have committed a crime, is not persecution. To punish a man, because we infer from the nature of some doctrine which he holds, or from the conduct of other persons who hold the same doctrines with him, that he will commit a crime, is persecution, and is, in every case, foolish and wicked. . . . [We should not have] accused her government of persecution for passing any law, however severe, against overt acts of sedition. But to argue that, because a man is a Catholic, he must think it right to murder a heretical sovereign, and that because he thinks it right he will attempt to do it, and then, to found on this conclusion a law for punishing him as if he had done it, is plain persecution. . . . If, indeed, all men reasoned in the same manner on the same data, and always did what they thought it their duty to do, this mode of dispensing justice might be extremely judicious. But as people who agree about premises often disagree about conclusions, and as no man in the world acts up to his own standard of right, there are two enormous gaps in the logic by which alone penalties for opinions can be defended. . . . Man, in short, is so inconsistent a creature that it is impossible to reason from his belief to his conduct, or from one part of his belief to another.

Forrest Williams
Evanston, Illinois

Communism and Cancer

A CAREFUL reading of the Forum articles on the Washington case indicates that the real nature of communism is far from being carefully assessed or, if properly assessed, is being woefully undervalued.

Argument from analogy is dangerous, yet argument from analogy is the clearest means of presenting the danger that comes from communism. Consider the difference

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between cancer and many other known disease, virus or bacterial. The two latter are foreign bodies and are *fought* by every means available to the organism. The struggle may end in death, but with help from the physician, more frequently ends in restoration of health, with a concomitant immunity against further attacks.

Cancer is a different proposition. A *single* cell may destroy in no great time its host. The cell is immune to every known curative agency, and even the agencies used to inhibit it, such as X-ray, may in turn produce it. It may for a time be rendered relatively quiescent, only to break out again in more virulent form. The only known safeguard is the surgeon's knife.

To any one who has followed the development of Communist tactics it is perfectly obvious that communism and cancer follow parallel courses. Both operate *within* the organism. Eastern Europe and China have come into the Russian orbit, not by external conquest, but by internal seizure of the forces of the body politic by a group under Communist discipline.

The danger lurking in Communist teachers is just this: they are agents of *destruction* pledged to follow orders, not necessarily openly, but under cover, where their actions cannot be noticed. Like the cancer cell, they gather others like themselves unto themselves, until finally their power of destruction has multiplied and they take over because all controls have been starved to the point of ineffectiveness. The organism as it was perishes, and the cancer perishes also because it has nothing to contribute to constructive operation.

The analogous situation holds in the case of Russian satellite states. Communism could destroy, but cannot create. Hence, Tito and others look to the *West* for trade. Their body politic must gain sustenance from somewhere. It cannot be secured from Russia, for communism is draining their life blood.

Americans therefore cannot be complacent. Nor can they afford to permit even one Communist to remain in government or education. This is not a case of academic freedom; it is a case of democratic survival. Russia maintains her Communist system by means of the surgeon's knife—the purge. If we do not control the Communist, we may be forced to use a similar means to preserve the democratic state.

Charles A. Tonsor
8315 116th Street
Kew Gardens, N. Y.

Two "Influential Classes"

Witches and warlocks, with pure vileness fraught,
To be despised need only to be thought—
But thought too oft they don the garb of fact,
Scare plain men mad, then drive the daft to act.
—C.H.M.

At the time of the hanging of the Salem witches, clergymen, judges and statesmen —"The wisest, calmest, holiest persons of their days," according to Nathaniel Hawthorne—stood in the inner circle about the gallows and gave the proceedings official sanction. This fact alone sufficed to convince the last doubting Thomas of New England Puritanism that the verdict was a just one. But, notwithstanding, it did not constitute scientific evidence for the existence of witches; and critical minds have learned, in the centuries since these tragedies occurred, to reason with Hawthorne that "that terrible delusion . . . should teach us, among its other morals, that the influential classes, and those who take it upon themselves to be leaders of the people, are fully liable to all the passionate error that ever characterized the maddest mob."

Today again witches and warlocks are being discovered in our midst; and again clergymen, judges and statesmen are offering to lead a procession in the direction of the gallows. It cannot be said with certainty that these leaders will succeed in their ambitions, but the fact that they have them and that they may succeed in realizing them would seem to prove that the lesson of Salem has not been learned.

What can be averred, however, is that a modern re-enactment of the Salem tragedy would demonstrate the fallibility of those responsible for it in a manner totally unrealizable in the seventeenth century. For today the calm and the wise at least have

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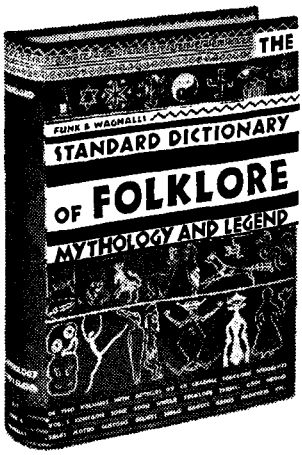

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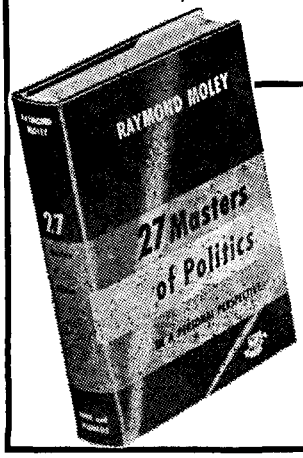
What is this art of American Politics?

RAYMOND MOLEY

Contributing editor of Newsweek, author of "Perspective" in that magazine, and also of a syndicated newspaper column. Professor of Public Law at Columbia, he was formerly assistant Secretary of State.



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a voice which is separable from that of the ecclesiastical and political authorities, and contemporary doubting Thomases would be neither so inarticulate, nor so disreputable, nor so few as they were in that earlier era.

We live today, indeed, almost without our being aware of it, under a system of dual authority, a system characterized by the compresence of two "influential classes" (to use Hawthorne's term) working together in precarious partnership. One is the traditional politico-religious élite, the factions of which in large part have patched up their differences. The other is the emergent but fairly unanimous and vocal scientific group. And it requires no intimate knowledge of the respective methods and records of these institutions to reveal the possibility of disagreement between them on matters of policy, and hence the necessity of error on the part of one at least, since both could not then be correct. Any repetition of Salem would of course dramatize this necessity for all to observe.

Are Seattle and Salem analogous? I think not. They differ notably in that, while authority was essentially united and totalitarian in the latter, in the former it is at least potentially divided, as representative commentaries in THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR Forum and elsewhere clearly indicate. But they are alike occasions for the advancement of public enlightenment. And as such, if we do not insist on seeing in it merely another inevitable episode in the Cold War, the tragi-comedy of 1949 may well dwarf in significance the historic delusion and tragedy of 1692.

Cecil H. Miller
Manhattan, Kansas

What Was the True Offense?

WHY WERE Mr. Butterworth and Mr. Phillips discharged in 1949? Because they had been found unfaithful in the search for truth? Because (as Mr. Smith implies) nobody knew how to get along with them, and their colleagues turned completely from their regular work in order to watch them? The Forum on communism and academic freedom does not suggest the belated discovery of any such facts. Rather it confirms other reports in showing that membership in the Communist Party and loyal membership in a community of scholars had for years been compatible.

No. Their offense was against the Canwellian concept of the national interest, even though the verdict said that a Communist cannot allow his reason to seek truth freely and proclaim it without bias.

Let us consider further this demand for intellectual integrity. In members of the disciplined Communist Party the presumption is against that quality. In no other groups? Are there not classes whose thoughts or words defer to the demands of a church? Those to whom the Bible is the ultimate authority? What shall we say of those whose behavior toward other races belies their reasoned belief in equal rights? Or of those associations to whom American power is dearer than unbiased research and utterance?

Many groups, indeed, tend to put some interest above reasoned truth. Should each of their members be barred from teaching? Guilt and responsibility are personal. Only that which a particular man says or does can justify action against him. The Seattle case shows no reason for excluding Communists from this rule, for creating a class of untouchables. The ideas which led to the expulsion of Butterworth and Phillips—and Gundlach, too—call for strong protest, lest academic freedom be gravely and widely threatened.

Edward S. Allen
509 Welch Avenue
Ames, Iowa

MISCELLANEOUS COMMENTS

Bourgeois Genetics and Party-line Darwinism

I have had no training in genetics, but I have tried to understand the battle between the Columbia University group and the Soviet geneticists. The Columbia group, like Professor Plough, speak and write with

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such a burning hatred for the USSR that not much sense can be made of their writings. Perhaps they are right. The tone in which they write suggests otherwise. The fact that THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR gives no hearing to the other view rather fortifies the impression that the Columbia view will not endure the light of discussion.

I know that an American faculty member was dismissed expressly because he had written favorably to Lysenko. Plough makes a quotation that would give the impression that this sort of thing also happened in the Soviet Union. Specifically (skipping Dr. Muller's oratory), I have not been able to learn of anyone being dismissed from his job or otherwise disciplined, for his opposition to Lysenko. It may have happened. If it did, they are as bad as we are.

More than forty years ago I realized the absurdity of the view of Weismann that acquired characters cannot be inherited. Someone once said that that means that the amoeba had a Beethoven wrapped up in it. About a generation was needed to drive the Columbia group from that extreme position.

Pretty soon the Columbia group will be forced to give up the view that hereditary characters pass only through the reproductive cells. Graft hybrids have already made that position untenable.

I believe thoroughly in pure research. As nearly as I can gather, Mendelian research is permitted in the Soviet Union, but on a reduced scale, more emphasis being put on work that will achieve immediate results in agriculture.

Plough would leave the ordinary reader with the impression that Mendelian research has contributed to agriculture, although he does not flatly say so. Research in heredity has contributed to agriculture. As nearly as I can learn, Mendelian research has never contributed the least bit to agriculture. This does not condemn Mendelian research, but the record ought to be honest.

Emerson Stringham
Kerrville, Texas

Do Spiritual Values Require a Theological Basis?

The controversy between Dr. Edman and Mr. Myers, viewed from the angle of comments in the March issue of THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR, appears to invite the inescapable conclusion that between naturalism and supernaturalism yawns a gulf which neither science, nor metaphysics, nor theology can hope to span. For this reason all tendentious arguments pointing toward a reconciliation, as suggested by Theodore Greene, seem to be futile. The naturalist and the supernaturalist live in different "worlds," and for them there can never be "one world." Let a man once come to believe honestly that there can be, and are, "recurrences and uniformities in nature" without benefit of belief in a personal God, and no rhetoric or metaphysical theology can convert him to supernaturalism. Eternally for him the die is cast.

We are wont to chuckle over the inane hair-splitting controversies of the schoolmen, and ridicule their attempts to decide (sic) how many spirits can stand on the point of a needle. *Mutatis mutandis*, are our naturalists and supernaturalists any less deserving of censure for the sheer waste of time and energy in ceaselessly trying to mix theological oil and scientific water—attempting to persuade naturalism to kowtow to supernaturalism, or the latter to admit that a supernatural realm is just a myth, "phony"? It all adds up to a never-ending process of pouring water through a sieve.

Were I a wagering man, I would risk a tidy sum on the bet that neither Edman nor Myers, nor a single one of the sixteen sponsors of REPLIES, since reading all returns, has varied by a hair's breadth from his original positions; so "a plague o' both their houses!"

L. L. Rice
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